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[LORD TRESSILIAN'S DIFFICULTIES.]

A LIFE AT STAKE.

BY LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XXI.

Then thou shalt see him plunged, when least he fears,
At once accounting for his deep arrears. *Dryden.*

WHILE Ilde Dare pursued her fruitless errand to the Dare Arms, her ardent young lover hastened homewards, his bosom filled with generous thoughts of self-sacrifice, and his heart fluctuating between hopes and fears. With some comprehension of the character of Therwell, he had determined to examine his own pecuniary affairs, a duty heretofore avoided, and then hasten to Sir Allyn's enemy with a bribe that would tempt him to relinquish the hand of Ilde.

"He shall have every penny I own," he said to himself, "if he demands it as the price of Sir Allyn's safety, but he shall not have Ilde!"

Then his thoughts widened into speculations regarding the mysterious bond that united the baronet to his late father's secretary. He could not believe Sir Allyn to have been guilty of deliberate wrongdoing, and began to pity him as a helpless victim in the crushing folds of a monster. Resolving to befriend him with filial devotion, he crossed Eden Park, and came out upon a pleasant green lane serving as a by-way to Tressilian Hall.

The hall was a large and handsome modern villa, after the Italian style, and belonged as has been said to one of the smaller estates of the young viscount. It had a home-like air wanting to his ancestral house. The estate was much smaller than that of Edencourt, and it lacked the large, handsome park, the ornamental waters, and the broad fields that tended to make Sir Allyn's place an Eden. It had, however, ample lawns and terraced gardens descending to the river's bank, and a few meadows and pastures that made the estate look larger than it really was.

The viscount emerged from the lane into one of the gardens, and continued his way to a side-porch,

at which he entered the dwelling. Passing through an airy corridor, and through the wide central hall, he went to the library, and closed the door behind him.

This room was long and wide, with lofty walls lined with books, the monotony of which was relieved here and there by panelled portraits or crowning busts. The furniture had a rich but sombre look, and the carpet was of a dark sea-green hue that added to the gloomy effect of the apartment.

Lord Tressilian's first act was to throw open the windows and admit the fresh sunlight and air. He then seated himself before a quaintly carved desk, unlocked it, and engaged in the examination of his late father's papers.

They were neatly packeted and labelled, just as the late lord Tressilian had placed them but a few weeks before, possibly with a presentiment that his son and heir would soon be called upon to examine them. The young viscount felt his new honours press heavily upon him as he regarded these evidences of his father's thoughtful care, and, bowing his head, he indulged in his natural grief for the parent so recently lost. But his sorrow was too deep to find expression in tears, and, with a heavy sigh, he aroused himself, and engaged resolutely in his self-imposed task.

The various documents were untied and examined. Deeds and leases were glanced over. Receipts for money received from various sources, and of money paid, were looked at, and at last his lordship murmured:

"I am richer than I thought. I had expected to find some heavy debts, for only lately my father wrote to me saying that he had been extravagant and had lost money. He said too that he had invested largely in a Welsh mine which had filled with water, and that his loss would be heavy. Ah, here are the certificates of his shares!"

He read them attentively, and his brow clouded as he saw that the late viscount's losses must have been indeed heavy. He knew that those losses left him so much less to offer Therwell, and he put them away, after glancing at their sum total. Continuing

his investigations, he examined all the documents to be found, and finally came to the conclusion that his handsome income would not be seriously impaired by his father's misfortunes.

"I will see Therwell at once," he exclaimed, when his search was concluded. "I will settle the matter with him before I sleep."

He was about to close his desk, and put this resolve into execution, when there came a knock at the door, and his land-steward entered the room, bearing a small packet in his hand.

"Good-morning, Ressly," said Lord Tressilian, bowing. "I have been looking over my father's papers. What have you there?"

"A letter, my lord; it came during your absence this morning," answered Ressly, advancing. "It bears the seal of his late lordship's lawyer, Mr. Jasper; so I made bold to bring it myself to your lordship, seeing that I may be able to explain anything that you do not understand!"

The viscount took the packet, motioning the steward to a seat. Breaking the seal, Lord Tressilian drew from the thick envelope a package of papers which presented a formidable appearance, with their rows of figures neatly footed up in columns.

The land-steward watched him in silence, and with an anxious look on his honest face. Evidently he understood the nature of the contents of those papers, and dreaded the effect upon his young master. He had been the confidential adviser of the late viscount, and had been perfectly well acquainted with his pecuniary affairs. Once or twice since the present lord's return from the Continent he had endeavoured to enlighten him upon the subject of his income, but the viscount had not been in a mood to discuss his affairs, and he had been obliged to wait until the present moment.

"Well, Ressly," said his young master, impatiently, after a minute's survey of the papers, "I can make nothing out of all this, except that my father was in the habit of borrowing money from his lawyer. 'Ah, what is this?' he added, as a letter dropped from the midst of the papers."

Picking it up, he read it through, with contracted



brows. It was from the money-lender, announcing, in lawyer-like phrase, that he had been of considerable use to the late Lord Tressilian, but that their friendly relations had been cut short by his lordship's untimely death; and he added that he should feel obliged to the present lord if he would close the account. With a declaration that he should be happy to honour the young viscount's paper at any time, he concluded with a host of congratulations and eulogistic expressions, which Lord Tressilian did not stop to read.

"What does all this mean, Ressly?" he asked, tossing the letter upon his desk.

"It means, my lord," responded the bailiff, "that your late father lost more money than his income would warrant, and that he borrowed of Jacob Jasper to meet the claims upon him. If he had lived he would have paid off every penny without impoverishing your lordship. A year or two of close economy would have put all to rights, and he never meant that this burden should fall upon you, my lord."

"I believe it," said Lord Tressilian, endeavouring to conceal his bitter disappointment. "So I must be poor for a year or two, Ressly? I need money now. I have pressing need of it. I suppose I can borrow it of Jasper?"

The bailiff uttered some energetic protestations against such a step, begging his young master as he valued his future not to have recourse to a money-lender.

The viscount heard him in silence without comprehending, and then closed his desk, caught up his hat, and hurried from the room and the house.

He had experienced a painful disappointment, and his mood had become suddenly reckless. He wandered down by the river's side, thinking of Ilde, and his present powerlessness to assist her, when he conceived the determination to see Therwell at once and decide his fate. He set out immediately, with rapid steps, for Edencourt.

As he quitted the park and came up the terrace towards the mansion he beheld the object of his visit riding swiftly up the avenue. He hastened to intercept him before he could enter the dwelling, and came up to him just after Therwell had dismounted, and was about to ascend the steps.

Therwell greeted him politely, and with a cold smile. Lord Tressilian returned the salutation by a haughty bow, and requested a few minutes' conversation.

"With pleasure," said Therwell. "Shall we go in?"

"No; I will see you here," answered the viscount, his face glowing with conflicting emotions. "Let me come to the point at once, Mr. Therwell. You are the enemy of Sir Allyn Dare, and have his reputation in your power."

"More than that," said Therwell—"his life is in my hands."

"His life?"

"Yes," responded Therwell, carelessly, yet with a look that gave force to his words. "But what has this to do with your wish to see me?"

"Everything," declared Lord Tressilian, impatiently. "Sir Allyn Dare has promised you his daughter in marriage. She does not love you, and shudders at the thought of becoming your wife."

"I know all that," interposed Therwell, blandly.

"You know it, and you would force her to the altar?"

"Certainly."

Lord Tressilian was tempted to strike his enemy—for such he considered the enemy of Ilde—to the ground, but he checked the impulse, reflecting that violence would only injure the cause he wished to serve. Therwell seemed to read his thoughts; his dull eyes glowed, and his lips assumed a tantalizing smile. Assuming a calmness he did not feel, the viscount said:

"You demand the hand of Miss Dare as the price of your silence? You cannot love her, and she will always detest you. I suppose your object in bringing about this marriage is to become master of Edencourt. Sir Allyn will relinquish all his wealth to you if you will free his daughter, and I will give you all I own."

"Don Quixote!" said Therwell, looking at the young nobleman as if he were a natural curiosity. "Who empowered you to speak about this affair? Do you love Miss Dare yourself?"

"That is a subject not to be discussed between us," replied Lord Tressilian, haughtily. "I have offered you everything I can offer, and the reflection that you are impoverishing Sir Allyn and me will doubtless be as pleasant to you as this unsuitable marriage."

"Not quite," said Therwell, tapping his boot with his riding-whip, and speaking as coolly as if the matter under discussion was exceedingly trivial. "I have taken a fancy to Miss Dare, and am resolved to make her my wife. She has a haughty spirit, and

it would be delightful to me to break it and make her meek and gentle as a wife should be."

Tressilian's face flushed with indignation. He clenched his hands involuntarily, and with an effort repressed the tide of angry words that arose to his lips.

"Is this your final decision?" he asked. "It is. And if you will accept my advice you will conquer your love for a girl who will soon be another man's wife."

"Never, if I live!" declared Tressilian, with flashing eyes. "It is war between us—war to the knife! We will see which will conquer—love or hate!"

He turned on his heel, while Therwell laughed and ascended the steps. All the spirit of his nature was aroused in Lord Tressilian at that moment. He walked as though he were treading down all obstacles, and his face shone with the fire of indomitable resolution. Embarrassed as he was in his pecuniary affairs, worsted as he seemed to be in this struggle for Ilde, he felt a conviction that he should triumph, that Ilde would yet be his, and that Therwell would be overwhelmed with ruin.

In this mood he wandered again into Eden Park and encountered near the lake Ilde Dare on her return from her self-imposed mission. There was a somewhat lengthened interview between them, which we will not dwell upon, since it consisted principally in lovers' vows and a discussion of their mutual affairs. But when they separated both were hopeful and determined, and Lord Tressilian, to whom Ilde had partially unfolded the mystery of her father's life, had vowed to lend every energy to the task of freeing Sir Allyn's daughter from the hateful coils tightening around her.

CHAPTER XXII.

Like a thing of the desert, alone in its glare,
I make a small home seem an empire to me;
Like a bird in the forest, whose world is its nest,
My home is my all, and the centre of rest.

Clara.

IN the midst of a fair and lovely scene, embowered in green and blossoming trees, nestled the small estate of Monrepos. It consisted of a few verdant pastures where cattle and sheep browsed lazily, a few fertile meadows that looked like emerald gems in their settings of closely trimmed hedges, and a small grove, too small to serve as a retreat for anything of the animal creation, except a host of merry birds who seemed to consider it their especial home, and who played hide and seek with the sunbeams, making the air vocal with melody. The dwelling commanded a view of the Thames, and was nestled almost upon the river's bank and was surrounded with a host of protecting trees that almost concealed it from mere casual observation.

As may be guessed, the house was not a stately mansion and did not boast of majestic proportions. It was indeed simply a cottage *ornée*, but of exquisite beauty, and draped in a profusion of those clinging vines so often found in the descriptions of poets and so seldom discovered elsewhere. There was a long veranda, with straight, slender columns wreathed with vines in their first flush of spring foliage; there was a delicately latticed projecting window that seemed brought from Persia, and needed only an Oriental face at its panes to complete the illusion; there were graceful balconies in profusion, slender, spire-like chimneys in clusters surmounting the roof, and various other evidences of a refined and elegant taste. The grounds were in keeping with the dwelling. In front was a well-kept lawn, at one side a pleasure-land, filled with a wilderness of rose-bushes, now in early leaf, among which wandered intricate paths, all leading to a summer-house in the centre; at the other side was a prettily laid out flower garden, and in the rear were kitchen gardens, screened from view from the house by flowering orchards, whose branches seemed enveloped in hazy clouds of white and pink.

The place had been well named Monrepos. The heart must have been heavy indeed that would not have grown lighter amid these peaceful, sunny scenes. It had been the favourite home of the late Admiral Wilmer. The house had been designed by his young wife and built during his absence at sea. It was here his child had been born, and here that, after his retirement from his profession, he had delighted to sail up and down the river and imagine himself upon the sea he had loved so dearly. It was here that the happiest days of Adah Wilmer had been passed, and to this spot her heart turned instinctively in the first moment of her freedom.

It was early evening, and the house was all ablaze with lights. The front door stood invitingly open, revealing the long wide hall, with its niches filled with gleaming sculptured figures, its flaming

chandelier lighting the most distant corners, the cool mosaic floor with its intricate pattern, the walls ornamented with rich, soft frescoes, the work of a skilful hand, and the wide marble staircase winding gracefully upwards until lost to view.

Servants were grouped about in the hall, with eager faces and busy tongues, discussing the news that had been brought by some of the town servants, under charge of Mrs. Dilks, of their young mistress's perfect health and intended return to her childhood's home. The news had been received with loud rejoicings by the few superannuated retainers who had been for years in charge of the place, and, under the town housekeeper's directions, the house had been made to assume a festive air in honour of the home-coming. Mrs. Dilks herself, important and pompous, in a rustling black-silk gown, assumed command of the group, and constituted herself mistress of the ceremonies.

The drawing-room door stood partly ajar, enough to admit a peep into its charming interior. The glittering candelabra presented a blazing show of tall wax candles, whose light gleamed through the pendant cut-glass lustres and fell in a shower of prismatic hues upon the silver-inlaid Indian table beneath. The carpet looked like a fresh bed of woodland moss, sprinkled with exquisite flowers, linked together with strange arabesques. The furniture was luxurious—soft couches, yielding arm-chairs, cosy ottomans, and fauteuils, that might have been called "sleep-bubbles," the whole reflected in plate-glass mirrors that ran from floor to ceiling. The acme of luxury was attained by the liberal distribution of freshly cut flowers, whose fragrance pervaded the air. Delicately sculptured vases of the purest white were heaped high with vivid scarlet blossoms whose bright branches trailed over the sides; antique jugs of veritable Egyptian origin were crowded with odorous flowers; and two quaintly shaped scent-jars, on either side of the bright fire, that glowed and sparkled cheerfully in the fire-place, dispensed a spicy sweetness that mingled with the odour of the flowers and gave an invigorating perfume to the air that might otherwise have been heavy with fragrance.

Behind the drawing-room, and seen through the partly open folding-doors, was the luxurious dining-room. The glitter of costly plate and the sparkle of gem-like crystal, in the lamp-light and fire-light, could be seen, thus completing the charm of the scene.

This department had been under the charge of Watkins, the town butler, who had followed the domestic, with the more valuable plate in his keeping, who may joined his subordinates in the corridor, and assumed a commanding air, befitting one who felt himself in a measure the guardian and protector of his young mistress.

The servants were in the midst of eager gossiping, which even Watkins's presence failed to check, relative to the mysterious marriage of the late admiral's daughter, and the singular conduct of the uncle, when the rumbling of wheels up the carriage-drive was heard. Voices were instantly hushed, and stillness reigned, while every face turned towards the door.

The ex-steward, as became his confidential position in the household, advanced to the veranda, followed by the housekeeper, and welcomed his young mistress with a joyful fervency that warmed her heart. She paused a moment to speak to him, then entered the hall, attended by her maid, and looking so like a queen, in the hour of her triumph, that an involuntary cheer of admiration greeted her.

She acknowledged the compliment by a bow and smile; her eyes sparkled and her cheek flushed with sudden pleasure. She had expected to come to a quiet home and to be received quietly, and this enthusiastic reception at once surprised and touched her. She gave her hand to the housekeeper, uttering a few words of praise that greatly endeared her to the worthy woman's heart; she spoke gently to each of the servants, and addressed by name each of the retainers who had been left in charge of the place since the death of her late father. Her gentleness and graciousness deepened their admiration into respectful devotion, and, when she turned and entered the drawing-room with a stately step, every eye followed her affectionately, and every voice again lent itself to swell a rousing cheer.

"Well, I am at home again, Nelly," said the young bride, advancing to the centre of the drawing-room, and looking around her with moistened eyes. "This is the house where I was born, and where I hope to spend the remainder of my life. This place has few associations connected with Mr. Wilmer, and I believe I can forget the past here, and lead a useful, happy existence."

"You speak like an old lady, miss," said the privileged Nelly, with a sigh, "and not like a beautiful young bride of one-and-twenty."

"Hush, Nelly. I do not like to think of my marriage," and a burning blush suffused the lady's cheeks. "Here I may forget by what sacrifice of maidenly delicacy I secured my freedom. You must be careful never to mention my husband's name."

"I will remember, my lady," promised the maid, in a tone of disappointment, she having been deeply impressed with the appearance of Sir Hugh Chellis, and having been engaged in creating pleasant day-dreams in which the young couple would learn to love each other, and their marriage thus become a union hallowed by tenderness and mutual respect. "But what will people say when they hear that you are married, and yet are obliged to call you Miss Wilmer? The neighbours may even say that you are not married at all—"

"The neighbours?"

"Yes, my lady. The Dares, of Edencourt, near the river; Lord Tressilian of the Hall, and others. Sir Allyn Dare may even forbid his daughter to call. These proud county families do not like family mysteries."

"They can stay away," said Lady Chellis, a look of pain passing over her proud face. "We will not discuss the subject, Nelly. I have retained Monrepos by a fearful sacrifice, and I am willing to lead a hermit's existence here, if necessary. I will not deny that the friendship of Miss Dare would be very pleasant to me, but if I cannot have it I shall not mourn. I will confess that I do not expect attentions from my neighbours, and that I am quite content."

She endeavoured to speak lightly, but there was an undercurrent of pain in her tones that touched her faithful attendant to the heart. But, affecting not to notice it, she came forward, relieved her young mistress of her bonnet and shawl, and wheeled nearer for her ladyship's use an arm-chair.

The cloud upon Adah's brow was but transitory. The proud, calm look returned to her half-baughty face, the smile came back to her red lips, and the consciousness of rectitude gave a repose to her manner. Instead of seating herself and giving way to despondency, she summoned the housekeeper, and went with her over the dwelling. Every room was well lighted, and the fair young proprietress went in and out of the handsome chambers, indulging in reminiscences of the far-away happy past, and planning a quiet, well-ordered future. Her own suite of rooms was discovered to be the finest in the house, and a throng of tender recollections pressed the heart of the maiden-brode as she entered them and requested to be left alone.

They had been fitted up for her use by her parents shortly before the death of her mother. The portrait of the bluff old admiral hung beside the picture of his fair and gentle wife, and the eyes of both seemed to rest upon their daughter in yearning love. Adah knelt before the portraits with bowed head and folded hands, murmuring a wild, incoherent prayer, with sobs and tears. She felt her desolation at that moment as she had never done before, and her soul sent up a wild cry for comfort. The prayer was answered. A strange, sweet calm fell upon her perturbed spirit, and it seemed to her that angel presences were about her, and that her parents were whispering words of love and soothing in her ears.

This conviction was strengthened when she arose from her knees and looked around her. The delicate frescoes on the walls had been done under the superintendence of her father; the paintings on the walls had been brought from Italy by him for her; the tiny statuettes that abounded had been chosen by him; while the dainty furniture of rose-colour and white had been selected by her mother. There were all the appliances of luxury, besides hosts of curiosities and trinkets, each having some association with those loved ones whose darling she had been. What wonder, then, that she cherished a sweet faith in guardian angels and ministering spirits, and believed that her guardian angels were those who had begun their tender ministrations in this life, and the evidences of whose love were now around her?

With a sweet and holy peace brooding at her heart, she went through the three or four rooms of the suite, finding everything as she had left it when taken away from Monrepos by her uncle after the death of her father. Gentle hands had kept everything bright and fresh, and it seemed to her that her imprisonment and sorrows were but idle phantasms now happily dispelled.

There was a happy light in her eyes when she returned to the drawing-room, and a smile on her lips that puzzled Nelly, who wondered that her young mistress did not repine at her compelled isolation. In pleasant abstraction, the young bride seated herself at the piano, and evoked a few sweet, murmuring sounds, full of harmony with the joyful pulsations of her heart. She lingered at her music

until Watkins came to announce supper, and then she arose and went into the dining-room, at the end of the drawing-room. Her cheerfulness had been infectious, for Nelly followed her with a pleased and contented face.

The repast was worthy the admiration of an epicure, and Lady Chellis complimented her delighted purveyor by bringing to it a better appetite than she had before displayed. Nelly, who was more of a companion than maid, was invited to share the meal, that it might seem less lonely to her mistress. In quiet enjoyment of a scene that appealed to the bride's æsthetic tastes, an hour passed quickly, and Lady Chellis then went into the drawing-room, and soon after retired to her own rooms for the night.

As she took possession of the chamber she had occupied in the life-time of her parents she felt a thrill of exultation in the reflection that she had saved this cherished spot from the grasp of her scheming relative, and that she was not only its rightful mistress, but the arbitress of her own destinies. This happy consciousness did not desert her in her sleep, and when she awoke at a late hour in the morning her heart was full of strange buoyancy and joyousness.

She attired herself becomingly, assisted by Nelly, and then descended to breakfast. The repast concluded, she summoned the ex-steward and the housekeeper to a brief consultation, and her domestic affairs established on a sound basis, she soon after set out to walk over the estate, and to indulge in reminiscences of her childhood. Nelly attended her, as usual, but delicately maintained silence except when addressed.

The gardens were explored, the two gardeners consulted with regard to a few immaterial changes in their arrangements, and Lady Chellis then directed her steps to the green fields where the spring daisies studded the ground. With something of childish delight she plucked a handful of the flowers, exulting in her freedom, in the bright sunshine, the soft breeze, and the tranquil beauty of the scene. After her long imprisonment she saw beauty in everything—in the young lambs, the upspringing grass, the hedges in early leaf, and in the gay, wild birds that sang in sympathetic exultation.

She lingered long in the sunny open fields and meadows, but turned her steps at last, when the sun grew fiercer in his regards, to the cool and pleasant grove. Here the shadows lay thickly, but the venturesome sunlight strayed in and settled in tiny pools upon the narrow, well-worn foot-paths, giving the place the aspect of a fairy dell. Violets, fragrant wood-violets of deepest blue, opened their eyes meekly here and dispensed their sweet odours lavishly. Adah gathered them, and twined them in bunches with her daisies, and listened to the birds, who fluttered in and out of the shade, with a delicious sense of enjoyment she had never before known.

In the shade of a giant oak, near a small brook that intersected the grove and ran through the fields, was a wooden bench, and the young bride took possession of it, her maid choosing to wander about in search of other flowers. The cool shade, the fragrance of her wild blossoms, the filtering sunlight, the murmuring of the brook, the songs of the birds, and the happy beatings of her own heart, all conspired to lull the maiden into a dreamy mood, as delightful as it was unusual. Perhaps she thought of Sir Hugh, for a soft colour mantled in her cheeks, her eyes shone with a sweet, tender light, and she forgot to mark the flight of time.

At last she aroused herself with a heavy sigh, and looked around her. Nelly was sitting upon a stone at the foot of a tree at a little distance, her eyes closed drowsily, and her lap filled with flowers. Lady Chellis looked at her watch, and started on discovering that the afternoon had well deepened, and that the luncheon-hour had passed unnoticed.

"Why, where has the time gone?" she exclaimed, arising. "Come, Nelly, come at once!"

The maid aroused herself and joined her mistress, and they returned to the dwelling together. After a hasty rearrangement of her toilet Lady Chellis ate her luncheon, and then ascended to her rooms to dress for dinner. Even during her enforced seclusion she had never omitted to make an elaborate daily toilet, but upon this occasion, as if to celebrate her restoration to freedom, her attire was unusually becoming.

She returned to the drawing-room, dressed in a robe of mauve *moiré* which trailed after her in a long, flowing train. Her snowy shoulders were covered only by a bertha of filmy white lace which set off their beauty instead of concealing it, and her rounded white arms were bare and gleamed like delicately chiselled marble. Her dusky hair was caught up low at the back of her head in a classic knot, and confined there by a feathery spray of diamonds. She wore a necklace and bracelets—the identical gems that had been pledged to Sir Hugh as a guarantee

for the payment of the promised sum. Beautiful as a Greek statue in the contour of her features, but gifted with a bloom and radiance that statue and painting can never attain, sparkling with a multitude of gems that flashed in the light of the myriad candles, she looked more than ever like a young queen—and no longer like a queen uncrowned.

The projecting window was filled with flowers, and the evening breeze swept over them, ruffling them of their fragrance, and then wantonly flinging it upon the air. The lace curtains fluttered gently, but the lights in the candelabra burned steadily. Dismissing her maid, Lady Chellis took her seat at the piano, and accompanied her thoughts with a strange, liquid melody, now soft and sweet, now sad, then again wild and full of anguish. So absorbed was she that she failed to hear the sound of an arrival, and was consequently startled beyond expression when the drawing-room door opened, and Baker, the footman, announced:

"Miss Chellis!"

At the sound of that name Adah sprang up like a frightened fawn; her first thought was of retreat. But retreat was impossible, and she stood like a statue under the chandelier, the colour fluttering in and out of her cheeks, and the light waxing and waning in her glorious eyes.

Miss Chellis entered almost before her name had been fully enunciated, and found her standing thus. The little old lady, in her antiquated costume, paused, and regarded the maiden with surprise and admiration.

"I have the pleasure of meeting Miss Wilmer—Adah Wilmer, have I not?" questioned Sir Hugh's aunt, her keen black eyes scrutinizing the young bride's lovely face.

Adah strove to recover her self-possession, but her embarrassment was too painful to be readily overcome. Her mind was confused, and but one thought developed itself from the chaos, that thought was that she had carefully preserved her identity from Sir Hugh, and consequently Miss Chellis could not be aware of her singular marriage.

"I am Adah Wilmer," she said, with an effort to speak calmly, and stepping towards her guest. "And you," she added, scarcely knowing what she said, yet conscious that she ought to say something—"you are Miss Chellis, my father's old friend, and almost my relative!"

"Am I not quite?" inquired Miss Chellis, kindly. "Are you not Lady Chellis—Sir Hugh's bride?"

Adah looked up with a wild and startled gaze. Then soft blushes gave way to a scarlet tide that surged in and out of her cheeks; she dropped her gaze, and stood a perfect picture of maidenly shame and confusion, not daring to look up, and not having strength to move.

The little old spinster was moved by her confusion. She hobbled forward with her cane, her boots clicking faintly as they sank into the carpet, and her elfish face full of sympathy. She took the cold, unresisting hand of her grand-nephew's bride, and led her to a couch, saying, in her peremptory tones:

"This won't do at all, my dear. We can't have this, you know. You have nothing to be ashamed of—nothing at all. You are a girl of spirit, after my own heart. Come, look up and kiss your great-aunt, though I know I don't deserve it after leaving you to the mercy of that wretch of an uncle of yours all these years."

This style of address had the effect. Adah struggled for composure, and ventured to lift her gaze, but Miss Chellis was not content until the maiden's lips had caressed her withered cheeks, and until she had kissed her in return.

"There now," she said, in tones of satisfaction, "we have placed ourselves upon the proper footing immediately. Dear me, how could that scheming fellow have ever pretended you were insane? You are not insane, are you, my dear? But it will be as well if I settle the point for myself. I'm as good a mad-doctor, I fancy, as the one (Mr. Wilmer employed," she added, dryly.

She looked keenly into the troubled face beside her, putting her hand under Adah's chin, that she might contemplate her countenance more at her ease. Her bright black eyes seemed to penetrate the maiden's very soul. She studied the lovely, quivering mouth, the fair, smooth brow, but more than all the bashful eyes that at first hesitated to meet her gaze and then lifted themselves resolutely and sorrowfully.

"About as insane as I am," was Miss Chellis's comment, when she had concluded her investigation. "I should never have got over it, Adah Wilmer, that is, Chellis, if that wretch had kept you shut up until he had secured your property. What a wild sort of will that was of your father's, to be sure. I never heard of anything more crack-brained in my life. Thank Providence that you outwitted your guardian

at last. I should have liked to have seen him when you announced your marriage."

Again the young bride drooped her head in confusion.

"Now, Adah," said the little lady, decidedly, "it won't do to be ashamed of what you have done. In trying to keep your father's property you have acted like a noble, spirited girl. Anybody with the brains of a mouse would say the same. If my hearty approval will do you any good, you have it. I understand all about the trial to your delicacy, and all that, but I must say that I respect you a great deal more than if you had folded your hands and let that old sinner take your fortune."

"How did you find me out?" faltered the bride, her voice tremulous and her manner downcast.

"By the merest accident in the world," responded the old lady, taking Adah's hand in her own. "That scapegrace, Hugh, never told me a word, and would not have done so but for Mr. James Wilmer."

"Mr. Wilmer?"

"Yes. Let me tell you how it all occurred. I was sitting peacefully in the drawing-room at Hawk's Nest this morning, thinking to myself whether I'd better leave my money to found an African mission or leave it to Hugh, when who should come in but Mr. James Wilmer. He wanted to see my grand-nephew. While he waited I entered into conversation with him and he told me you were insane. I doubted him, for he acted and looked like a villain—didn't meet my eyes once. I told him what I thought of him, and then Hugh summoned him to the library. I followed, thinking to expose his real character to my nephew. I got there in time to hear a very pretty conversation, not meant for my ears."

She paused, and laughed softly to herself, thumping her staff into the carpet, and resumed:

"It seems that Mr. James Wilmer had the idea that Hugh was married to his niece, and Hugh supposed Mr. Wilmer had come to visit me. They talked at cross-purposes a while, and then it came out that that stupid nephew of mine had married a girl named Adah Holte, without once suspecting her to be Adah Holte Wilmer. Men, my dear, are fearfully stupid creatures. I should have suspected the truth in a minute, had I been Hugh. So I stepped out and confronted the two, and told Hugh who his wife was, and Mr. James Wilmer left Hawk's Nest in a hurry, and Hugh and I set out at once to offer you our protection."

Adah's face was very pale as she said:

"My dear Miss Chellis—"

"Aunt Dorothy!" interrupted the little lady, peremptorily. "I am not going to be cheated out of my rights, Adah. I am your great-aunt, my dear."

"Aunt Dorothy," replied Adah, "what does Sir Hugh think of me?"

"Think of you?—why, just what he should think! On the way here he told me how the marriage had been brought about: And he did say he was about starting in search of you when that viper came to us. He had a clue, because your tickets were to West Hoxton. You are not quite sharp enough, my dear, to outwit those who love you, even if you outwit your enemies. Hugh is a romantic young fellow, though strangely enough he never cared for women. He admires spirit too, and he hasn't been able to think of anyone but you since his first meeting with you. He said to-day that he thought more highly of himself now, since he had been of assistance to you. He is as chivalrous, my dear, as any knight of olden time; and his only grief is that he accepted any money from you. And that reminds me, Adah, that if either has cause to be ashamed it is he, not you. He feels it so, and says if he had not taken the money in the manner he did he should not be ashamed to meet you!"

This view of the case encouraged the young bride. A faint smile flickered about her mouth, and a more hopeful expression took possession of her face.

"Where is he?" she asked.

"At the village inn. He wanted to come with me, but was not certain of his reception. I promised to do what I could for him. He is a young scapegrace, Adah, and not worthy of you by any means, but he is your husband and you ought to live together!"

"Never!" exclaimed the bride, energetically. "You cannot think so, Miss Chellis. Did your nephew not tell you of our compact never to see each other again?"

"Certainly, and that compact was well enough then. I intend to stay here until you do receive Hugh, for you have need of protection from that relative of yours."

With these words, Miss Chellis quietly untied her great, old-fashioned bonnet and threw aside her pelisse, revealing her quaint brocade, with its decorating ruffs.

"I shall be glad for you to stay, Aunt Dorothy," said Lady Chellis—"but not Sir Hugh!"

"Humph! You'll see him, of course, when he calls in the morning?"

Adah responded in the negative.

"But what will your servants and neighbours think, if you refuse to see your husband?"

"My servants know that I am married, but they do not know to whom. They call me Miss Wilmer. As to the neighbours, I shall see none of them!"

"Dear, deary me!" exclaimed Miss Chellis. "Going to turn hermit at your age, eh? It can't be done, Adah," she added, firmly. "Not a bit of it. To act as you desire will be to ruin your name—the name your father covered with honour. You must come out boldly. Tell your servants and everybody that you are Lady Chellis. If you don't you may be sure that you'll be set down as a lunatic, and Mr. James Wilmer will have control of you again."

"Would Sir Hugh be willing for me to bear his name?"

"Of course. He would feel honoured. You must be recognized as Lady Chellis at once, and I shall remain with you until you receive Hugh as your husband."

"Then you will always remain, Aunt Dorothy!"

"What headstrong things young people are!" ejaculated Miss Dorothy; adding, curtly, "No, I shan't remain always, Adah Chellis. You will have pity upon that poor, anxious boy, who has fallen in love with your pretty face. You can't have the heart to turn him off like a servant of whom you are tired."

"But you, who know him so well, Aunt Dorothy," said Adah, rather archly, "are in doubt whether to leave your fortune to him or to the heathen. I am a perfect stranger to him, and if you consider him—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Miss Dorothy, her cheeks reddening deeply. "I was only trying the lad. I didn't really intend to cut off the only relative I had in the world and leave my money for a parcel of heathen to buy civilized gridirons to roast each other on. I had some thought, but let that pass. I've given up my heathenish idea—for it wasn't much better—and intend to divide what I've got between you and Hugh if you live apart, or else give all to him. Indeed if you refuse to accept him as a husband," she added, struck with a happy idea, "I will leave it all to you and impoverish him."

Adah combated this resolution, declaring that she had enough, but Miss Chellis persisted in her declaration, saying that in that way she could repay the sum given Sir Hugh on account of the marriage. Lady Chellis protested against even these threatenings, and the old lady was forced to "possess her soul in patience." The fly in which she had come was dismissed without a message to the young baronet, and Adah conducted her to a suite of rooms upon the ground-floor and aided her to prepare for dinner.

They returned to the drawing-room as Watkins announced dinner.

"Please give me your arm, my dear Lady Chellis," said the old lady, in a loud, distinct voice, meant for the ears of the ex-steward.

Watkins understood that the marriage was to be kept secret no longer, and a look of pride passed over his weather-beaten face as Adah gave her arm to the old lady and conducted her to the dining-room. He seemed to feel a personal exaltation in the aggrandizement of his young mistress, and addressed her as "my lady" continually, as if the title were sweet in his ears.

Before an hour had passed the entire establishment were talking of "my lady," and "her ladyship's great-aunt," and were discussing the history of Sir Hugh Chellis, of whom an idea prevailed that he was a sprightly, generous young gentleman, who had thrown away fortunes, but who was now going to become as sober and staid as his young wife could desire.

Nelly Thomas, of course, took her share in the gossiping, but she was careful not to betray the secret of the marriage. Indeed, she caused it to be received as a fact that the marriage was the result of the well-known friendship between the families of Chellis and Wilmer. She expatiated largely upon the personal attractions of the young baronet, and hinted her belief that the young couple would eventually be brought together.

Meanwhile, Miss Dorothy and Adah dined, and then returned to the drawing-room, where the bright-eyed old lady again assailed her, begging her at least to see Sir Hugh.

"I cannot, dear Aunt Dorothy," said the young bride, earnestly. "Do not ask me again, I beg of you. I could not look him in the face. I know what he must think of me in his heart. I will not see him."

From this resolve she could not then be swerved. But instead of being discouraged, the little old spinster, who seemed to Adah like a withered fairy, smiled quietly, and her black eyes sparkled with delight at some project of her own. What that project was was not revealed to her young hostess, but some light might have been thrown on it by the fact that she sought her rooms at an early hour and wrote a note to her grand-nephew, which she dispatched with the utmost secrecy by a willing servant. That done, she laughed, and retired to bed.

(To be continued.)

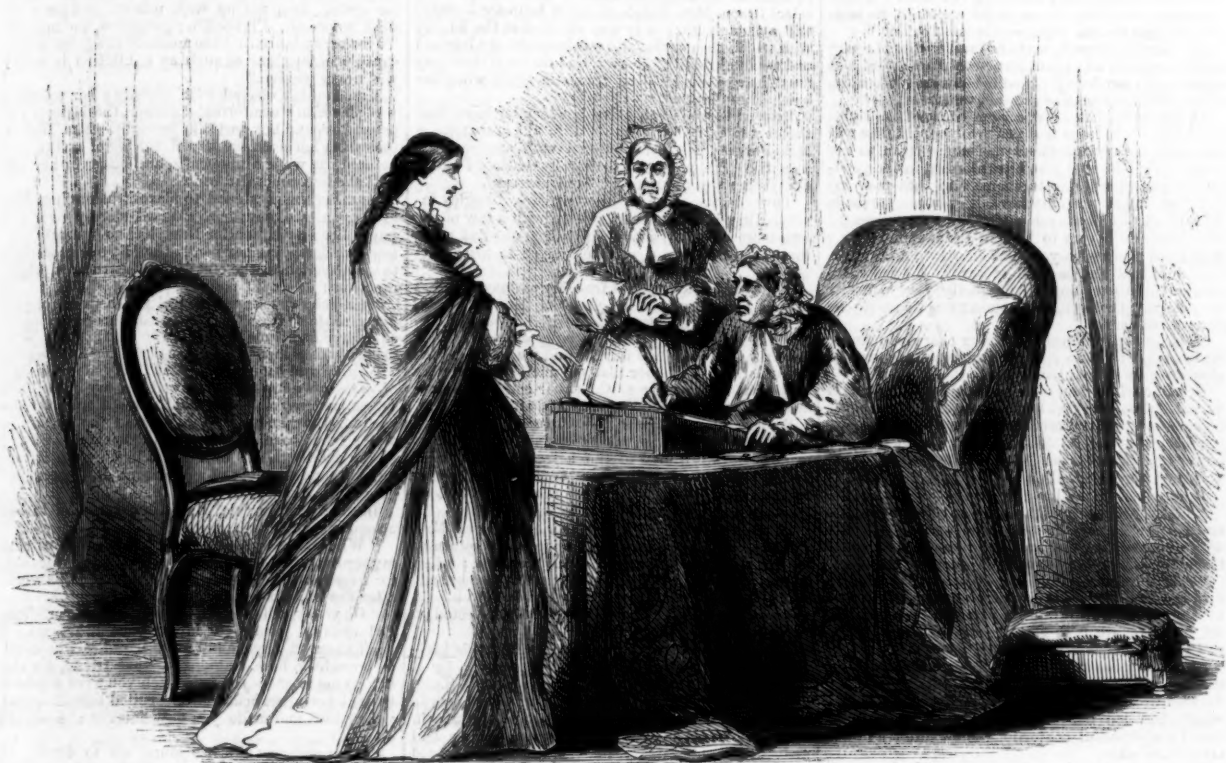
QUEEN MARY'S BURIAL BILLS.

THE charges for the funeral consist of the account of John Fortescue, the keeper of the Queen's great wardrobe; and comprise disbursements for cloth, silk, liveries for 540 mourners, the pall and hangings, and for carriages and riding chargers for officers and others. The black cloth for liveries for the mourners, amounting to 1,599 yards, and costing 955*l*. 18*s*. 2*d*., was distributed amongst the 540 mourners according to their degrees, the Earls of Rutland and Lincoln receiving ten yards each; the Countess of Bedford, who was chief mourner, sixteen; and those of Rutland and Lincoln twelve yards each; the bishops and barons and their wives received eight yards a-piece; knights and their ladies six; esquires five; gentlemen three and a half; and yeoman one and a half. Amongst the items there is a charge of 115*l*. 18*s*. 8*d*. for different head-dresses for the female mourners. Those for the three countesses cost 4*l*. 18*s*. 10*d*. a-piece, and are termed Paris heads. There is likewise a charge for six large "bongraces" at 62*s*. each. (Cotgrave defines these latter as "the uppermost flap of the down-hanging tail of a French hood, whence, belike, our Bongrace, also a muff or snuffkin.") Under this charge are also included white heads for the gentlewomen, a large attire of lawn with a barb for a Scottish gentlewoman, and five head attires for gentlemen.

One hundred and twenty poor women had one ell of Holland a-piece allowed to them for kerchers to serve as head-dresses, together with one shilling as dole or arms money. The duties paid to the Dean of Peterborough amounted to 40*l*. 15*s*. 10*d*.; out of which the grave cost 10*l*.; the carriage of the corpse to the grave, 20*s*.; perfumes, 2*s*. 6*d*.; and 20*l*. was paid to him in consideration of the black baize that hung in the church, and 66*s*. 8*d*. for ringing the bells. To this account is appended that of William Dethicke, Garter King of Arms, for the hearse and other causes of heraldry used at the funeral, amounting to 400*l*. The hearse consisted of a frame of timber, twenty feet square and twenty-seven feet in height, covered over with black velvet, and richly set with escutcheons of the Queen's arms, and gold fringe which was erected in the choir of Peterborough Cathedral, and surrounded with double rails covered with black cloth, the inner rails being lined with baize.

The funeral took place in Peterborough Cathedral on the 1st of August, 1587, the Queen's body having been removed on the preceding night from Fotheringay Castle, and deposited in the quire in a vault on the south side, opposite to the tomb of Katherine of Aragon, the first wife of Henry VIII. It was not deemed expedient, on account of the great weight of the coffin and the heat of the weather (an accident having already happened at Fotheringay from the latter circumstance), that the body should be removed during the ceremony, and therefore its place was taken by an effigy of Mary, which was borne in procession under a canopy of black velvet, was laid in the hearse and covered with a pall of black velvet, upon which, on a purple velvet cushion fringed with gold, was placed a crown.

After all the mourners were arranged in their places according to rank, a sermon was delivered by the Bishop of Lincoln, and certain anthems were sung; after which the Countess of Bedford, as chief mourner for the Queen of England, made the offering, which consisted of the coat, sword, targe, and helmet, together with the standard and great banner. They were received by the Bishop of Peterborough and Garter King of Arms, and after the close of the ceremony were hung up in the cathedral. This being accomplished, the Dean of Peterborough proceeded to the vault where the body was laid, and read the funeral service, after which all the officers broke their staves and threw the pieces into the vault. The ceremony being thus completed, they all returned to the Bishop's palace to the funeral feast. The funeral cost something over 2,000*l*.; that of Queen Mary of England came to 7,662*l*. 1*s*. 9*d*.; that of Queen Elizabeth to 17,647*l*. 7*s*. 11*d*., much more at the present value of money.—*Accounts and Papers relating to Mary Queen of Scots*. Edited by Allan J. Crosby, Esq., and John Bruce, Esq.



[THE CODICIL TO THE WILL.]

SWEET ROSES YANGLED.

CHAPTER XXIII.

On the same night the first advance of Mrs. Langley was made towards an acquaintance with Miss Gordon.

Mrs. Bates had more than once manoeuvred to obtain an introduction to one who was rumoured to belong to the *crème de la crème* of her native place, and wealthy as the merchant was, his wife had a most plebeian desire to cultivate the acquaintance of aristocratic people.

The vivacity of Mrs. Langley, aided by the report that she was the possessor of a large fortune, had rendered her an object of much attraction since the restoration of her health enabled her to make her appearance among the gay throng assembled at the hotel; but hitherto she had confined her associations to a pleasant and select circle, and until this night she had shown no inclination to mingle with others.

Miss Gordon made her appearance at a late hour, accompanied, as usual, by Mrs. Bates, her son, and daughter. After dancing she went into the music-room, at the solicitation of several of her friends, to play and sing for them.

Mrs. Langley strolled into the room on the arm of one who ranked himself among her admirers, and at a whispered request from her he presented her to Mrs. Bates, who in turn introduced her to her son and Miss Gordon.

Rosa gave her a penetrating glance, for she had seen her conversing familiarly with Godfrey Fenton on the previous night, and was inclined to mistrust her on that account.

But the frank, sweet smile on the lips of Mrs. Langley disarmed her suspicions, and the few graceful words she addressed to her gave Rosa the impression that it was the desire of this fascinating stranger to cultivate her acquaintance which led her to seek an introduction to their party.

Mrs. Langley presently said:

"You will sing for us, Miss Gordon. I have before listened to you with delight, for your voice is one of rare sweetness, and you manage it with extreme skill. I adore music, though I am but an indifferent performer myself, and I absolutely cannot sing a note."

Rosa smiled brightly, flattered and elated by such words; she at once took her place at the piano, with Mr. Bates stationed by her side in readiness to turn over the music.

Adolphus was in gorgeous array, and looked as pompous and important as he possibly could under such gratifying circumstances.

"Beautiful Venice" was then in the zenith of its popularity, and that was the song which happened to be on the music-stand.

Rosa struck into the melody at once, her soft soprano voice doing as much justice to it as it was susceptible of, and the little knot of listeners were duly enraptured with the performance.

She gave the French pronunciation to the name of the city of the sea, and the unlucky Adolphus, wishing to make an impression on the bright-eyed stranger who had joined them, threw himself back and in his most pompous tone said:

"Beautiful Venus—yes, you are quite right, Miss Rosa. Venus was born of the sea, and a lovely song that is which celebrates her charms. But goddess as she was, she was scarcely more fair than the one who has so charmingly sung about her."

Rosa gave him a glance of angry annoyance at his absurd blunder, and he hastily whispered:

"What have I said—what have I done to merit so severe a look as that? My dear Rosa, you absolutely petrify me."

She deigned no reply, and Kitty, who had joined them, whispered in his ear:

"Don't make a goose of yourself, Dolly. Venice is an Italian city; I wish you had learned a little more of geography than you seem to know. If you had looked at the words of the song you would not have made such a ridiculous blunder."

Mr. Bates angrily retorted in the same tone:

"Geography be hanged! I won't be bullied by you, nor frowned on by my betrothed, if I did make a little mistake," and he turned sulkily away, and left the room.

Mrs. Langley, with that perfect tact which was a part of her nature, turned to Mrs. Bates and entered into conversation, managing to bring both the young girls to her side, charmed listeners to the sprightly and graceful nothings she listened with an intense interest.

To Rosa she finally addressed herself:

"I have desired for some time to make your acquaintance, Miss Gordon, for you have inspired me with much interest. I have lately heard something of your early history from a friend of mine. Godfrey Fenton spoke of you as one he had known and admired, and I determined to make an effort to approach you more nearly. I trust that now I have done so you will meet me at least half way."

The sudden colour that flashed into the face of the

girl, the tremor that thrilled through her voice when she replied, convinced the acute Mrs. Langley that the flirtation of which Fenton had so lightly spoken had left deeper traces in her heart than in his own fickle one. She asked, in a faint voice:

"What did Mr. Fenton say that could interest you in me? I—I scarcely expected such a service at his hands."

"And why not, Miss Gordon? Godfrey Fenton avowed his former *tendresse* for you, and I think he was much hurt last night when you refused to recognize him in the ball-room. He spoke of it to me soon afterwards."

The fluctuations in Rosa's countenance were marvellous in a person so self-controlled as she ordinarily was; but throughout that day a struggle had been going on in her heart between pride and outraged love. The sight of Fenton had brought back that bitter past so vividly that she almost doubted the victory she thought she had gained over herself. Coldly as her eyes had regarded him she would in that first moment of recognition have cast herself at his feet and implored to be taken to his heart again—to be tolerated and her devotion accepted, even if not loved as a wife should be.

All that day, while engaged in playing the wearisome games in which the soul of Mrs. Hawks delighted, Rosa had thought only of him and the chances in her favour when she became the actual possessor of the wealth she had so successfully angled for.

Yes, proud as she was by nature, Rosa Gordon felt that she would be willing to purchase the hand of the man who had once cast her off, leaving her to despair. She recalled his words uttered long ago, and she laid the flattering unction to her soul that she had been really and truly beloved by him: had she then possessed what was almost within her grasp now Fenton would have acted very differently.

When the wealth of Mrs. Hawks came actually into her possession what might he not be tempted to do? Her soul rejoiced anew in the possibilities that opened before her. Hope again sprang into being beneath the words of this stranger who was his friend, and who had been induced by his praises of herself to seek her acquaintance.

As these thoughts flashed lightning-like through her mind she raised her eyes to that bright face which was curiously scanning her, and softly said:

"Yes, I once thought Godfrey Fenton a gentleman, but he taught me a little lesson, and one I am not likely to forget. Since you are his friend, Mrs. Langley, I will say nothing of the causes that led to

our estrangement, for they would certainly reflect little credit upon him. I have forgiven him; I had in a measure forgotten him when he appeared so suddenly before me last night—so let that suffice."

Mrs. Langley bowed, made no farther effort to pursue the subject, and again turned to Mrs. Bates, and talked on in her lively, piquante manner. When she at length arose to retire she said to the ladies:

"I am sure that I have been charmed to-night, and I venture to hope that you two young ladies will take pity on my loneliness and come often to my room. Ah, I forgot! you, Miss Gordon, in the goodness of your heart, devote yourself to that poor invalid whose parlour joins mine. If you can persuade Mrs. Hawks to let me come into her room occasionally, I will endeavour to lighten the tedium of your days by sharing with you your efforts to amuse her. I am told that she is fond of cards. I too have a passion for them, and I will gladly play with her occasionally, that you may obtain a respite from your benevolent cares."

This was said with that winning charm of manner which rendered the speaker irresistible when she chose to gain over anyone.

Rosa, no wiser than others, yielded to its influence, and also promised that her new acquaintance should be admitted to Mrs. Hawks's presence on the following day, though she felt very uncertain as to her power to gain the invalid's consent to such an innovation on her usual habits.

In conclusion Mrs. Langley said:

"Tell your old friend that I am an adept at piquet, and I know a new French game for two persons which is easily learned and very amusing. I could teach her how to play it in a few moments."

"I shall be sure to tell her, Mrs. Langley; for, to own the truth to you, it would be the greatest relief to me to have a little aid in amusing Mrs. Hawks. As her strength fails she becomes more irritable, and I often feel as if I were overtasked."

Rosa was more successful with Mrs. Hawks than she had anticipated; for, as death approached, the doomed woman lost much of that shrinking feeling which had led her to conceal from the outside world the dreadful contortions she exhibited in her convulsive state.

She was tired of the seclusion in which she lived, though surrounded by a crowd; and when she was told of the charming woman who wished to teach her another game she at once declared that Mrs. Langley should be welcome to visit her whenever she desired to do so.

Rosa was dispatched at once to invite her, and the fair conspirator speedily came with her to the apartment which she was firmly resolved, should witness the overthrow and defeat of the heiress elect.

Of course the invalid was charmed with her visitor, for Mrs. Langley intuitively knew where to touch her weak points.

The game she had volunteered to teach was quickly learned, and by soon allowing Mrs. Hawks to conquer in nearly every encounter she was kept in the best of humours with her new acquaintance.

In spite of Rosa's keenness, Mrs. Langley proved more than a match for her, for she won her confidence completely and betrayed nothing herself, while she gained from the young schemer the history of that past which had left so bitter a wound behind it.

For hours they discussed Godfrey Fenton—his past was freely laid before the girl, who seemed never weary of inquiring into every particular concerning his early life; and unsparingly was he blamed by Mrs. Langley for his want of faith towards one so worthy of him as her dear Rosa was.

Mrs. Langley had entered into her part with the spirit of a thorough actress, and she justified her course to herself by the excuse so often made that "evil may be done if good is to result from it." Besides, she made the acquaintance of Inez in her aunt's room, and was not surprised that Fenton had become so passionately enamoured of her.

Mrs. Langley herself was almost equally charmed with her beauty and sweetness, and her desire to defeat Rosa gained added intensity after she knew her rival. Inez never mentioned Fenton's name, or alluded to him as the guest of her father, for he had warned her against betraying his vicinity to Rosa Gordon, lest it might awaken in her mind a suspicion of the efforts in progress to baffle her aspiring hopes.

Fenton did not lay bare his plot to Inez, for he felt that to her pure and unselfish mind the course he had taken would not appear the most noble or honourable, though it was determined on in defence of her interests. So he wisely kept his own counsel, though his spirits rose from day to day as his ally reported the rapid progress she was making towards the desired consummation.

The time for the grand experiment at length ar-

rived. Rosa had been induced, though with a show of reluctance, to mimic afflicted Mrs. Hawks for a select few of Mrs. Langley's most intimate friends; and although that lady was shocked at the fidelity with which the poor invalid was imitated, she laughed and applauded with the rest, and declared that they must have that amusing travesty again when her brother was present.

Rosa demurred to this, but her tempter knew that she should carry her point. With the assistance of Mrs. Perkins, who had entered with extreme zeal into the plan proposed to her by Godfrey Fenton, everything was prepared for the *dénouement*.

Towards the close of the week Mrs. Langley invited Kitty Bates and her brother, with a few of her own most intimate friends with whom she had made them acquainted, to a private supper in her apartments.

The door, which opened from her parlour into that of Mrs. Hawks, was in the centre of the wall. After Rosa and her mistress had retired Mrs. Perkins, with Fenton's assistance, brought a large mirror from the spot on which it hung and placed it at such an angle from this door that on unclosing it a little way what was passing at the upper end of the next apartment would be distinctly visible in it.

By careful experiment Mrs. Langley ascertained the precise spot on which the exhibition should be made to insure a view of the actress in the mirror, and she disposed her furniture accordingly, leaving an open space with a sofa for the background on which the proposed scene was to be enacted.

At a signal agreed on between herself and Mrs. Perkins, Mrs. Hawks was to be induced to return to her parlour at that unusual hour of the night; when the actress was in full action the door was to be suddenly unclosed, and the old lady permitted to behold the mimicry of her infirmities faithfully reflected to her from the adjoining room.

The Bates party was greatly elated by this invitation to Mrs. Langley's private apartments, for it was regarded as a distinction to be received there, and they gladly accepted it. Of course Rosa was to accompany them, for Mrs. Hawks would be safe in bed long before the hour named for assembling had arrived, and there was little danger that she would detect the presence of her young companion among Mrs. Langley's guests, even if the sounds of their late merriment should penetrate to her apartment.

The party assembled; cards were played, but without much attention to the games, for all seemed in the highest spirits and eager to talk. At midnight an exquisite supper was served, and champagne flowed freely. Rosa was fond of this exhilarating drink, and her hostess took care that her glass should never remain empty.

The waiters came in, removed the *débris* of the repast, and charades were proposed. There was some good impromptu acting, but Rosa was the life of the party. Her matchless powers of mimicry were brought into full play, and as a last *bonne bouche* Mrs. Langley insisted that a scene with Bijir should be enacted *à la Hawks*.

The dog had been petted by Mrs. Langley, and he had spent many hours in her room since her intimacy with her neighbours commenced. Of course she had him in readiness on this occasion, and he was lifted from the ottoman on which he was sleeping, and brought forward to bear his part in the proposed exhibition.

Rosa offered a few faint objections, but she was excited by the wine she had taken, and elated by the applause her previous efforts had elicited; so she yielded to the entreaties of her hostess, and launched into a scene of such broad farce that peals of laughter greeted her efforts.

Mrs. Langley whispered:

"Capital—nothing could be better. Go on, Miss Gordon, and let us have the old lady in all her phases."

And Rosa went on, unconscious that the dividing door had been partially unclosed, for the room beyond was in utter darkness, and that Mrs. Hawks was noting her every action reflected in the mirror.

Mrs. Hawks at last uttered an exclamation that alarmed Mrs. Perkins; the door closed as softly as it had opened, and the outraged woman gasped:

"Take me away—let me die. I have nothing to live for after witnessing such base ingratitude as that."

"I told you so, ma'am, but you wouldn't believe me," was the consoling remark of her attendant as she almost carried her back to her chamber.

When they reached it Mrs. Hawks fell into a spasm so violent and long-continued that Mrs. Perkins began to fear that in this attempt to unmask Rosa she had destroyed all hope for Inez. But after using her best skill to restore her, the old lady revived, and, after a brief sleep, awoke and asked:

"What time is it, Jane?"

"Past three o'clock, ma'am."

"There is time enough then for what I mean to do before that false creature comes fawning around me again. Prop me up with pillows, and place my desk before me. I'll spoil her prospects, the ingrate! To make my infirmities the mockery of a set of people capable of laughing at such an exhibition is what I will never forgive."

Mrs. Perkins obeyed with alacrity; her mistress was placed in a comfortable position, the desk opened before her, and her portfolio brought. Mrs. Hawks took from her neck the key of the jewel casket, and ordered the woman to open it, and bring to her the will she had concealed in it.

Mrs. Perkins hastened to place it before her. She tore open the envelope, glanced sternly over the pages her infatuation for Rosa had so recently dictated, and, dipping her pen in the ink, she proceeded to add a codicil to the end of the instrument, which ran thus:

"I hereby revoke and cancel the bequest of property made to Rosa Gordon in the foregoing pages, as I have had it clearly proved to me that she is as destitute of principle as she is of feeling or affection."

"I give and bequeath all that I may die possessed of, save the annuities bestowed on my niece, Inez Lopez, and my faithful maid, Jane Perkins, to be used for the benefit of the poor in the county in which I was born. Oakland, the ancient residence of my family, shall be made a home for destitute orphans, and the bulk of my fortune shall go to endow it."

Having written this, Mrs. Hawks turned to her attendant and asked:

"Who can be got in here at this hour to witness my signature? I will not sleep before this is finished, for I feel as if I shall never wake again in this world after the shock I have received."

"Oh yes, you'll outlive it, ma'am. That perfidious girl ain't a going to break your heart yet. I don't know of anyone but Mrs. Langley who could be brought in here, and she is your friend, for she helped me to show you how much you were deceived by that young serpent that has coiled herself around you of late, and made you do whatever she wished done."

"Yes; and now she has stung me to death. I feel it—I know it. I have received my death-blow, Jane. Bring whoever you please."

While Mrs. Perkins was absent Mrs. Hawks endorsed another envelope precisely as the first had been, and by the time it was ready Mrs. Langley came in in her night-dress, with a shawl wrapped around her.

She was startled by the ghastly change in the face of the invalid, and hastily said:

"My dear Mrs. Hawks, if I had dreamed that you would feel this so deeply I would never have attempted to expose to you how cleverly you have been duped by this young girl. I took an interest in you, and I could not bear to think that she was only playing a part to secure the fortune I am told you designed bestowing on her. Can you forgive me for permitting her to caricature you as she did in my presence? Be assured that it was allowed only for the purpose of showing her to you in her true colours."

To this Mrs. Hawks sadly replied:

"I do not think that my forgiveness will be of much consequence to you, Mrs. Langley, but I am glad that even such sharp practice opened my eyes in time. I have added a codicil to my will, which I wish you to witness."

"Anything I can do for you, my dear madam, I am ready to undertake. Of course, I will witness your signature, and affix my own after it."

"That is all I shall require."

And Mrs. Hawks carefully folded down the paper in such a manner as to conceal what she had written. With a trembling and unsteady hand she then wrote her signature, and handed the pen to her visitor.

Mrs. Langley dashed off her name impatiently, for she was disappointed at not being able to ascertain something of what had been added to the document. Mrs. Perkins wrote hers beneath, and Mrs. Hawks folded the will, and placed it in the envelope she had prepared for it. After carefully sealing it she gasped:

"It is finished. Lock it up in the casket, Jane, and leave it till it is called for."

This was scarcely accomplished and the key returned to her when she fell into violent contortions, and the two who watched beside her thought that every moment would be her last. But the spasmodic action ceased at last, and she fell into a deep sleep, from which she awoke half an hour later in another spasm.

Her physician was hastily summoned, but before he could reach her side she had passed from earth and all its troubles, and both niece and adopted daughter had lost their chances of inheriting her fortune, so far as her will could deprive them of it.

Mrs. Langley had made a hurried toilet, and returned to watch beside her through those fearful hours, but when convinced that all was over she returned to her own room and wrote the following note to Fenton:

"DEAR GODFREY.—The race succeeded but too well, and the result has filled me with compunction for the part I have played. I did it for the best, but it has turned out very sadly.

"Mrs. Hawks is dead, and I am afraid that her decease was hastened by what she saw last night through that door which opens from her parlour into mine. Everything went off according to our wishes. Rosa Gordon exposed her baseness as we had planned, and the old woman was taken back to her chamber in a state of great excitement. She had one of her attacks, but revived sufficiently to carry out her purpose of depriving the fair mimic of all chance to inherit her fortune; but, alas! she did not tear up the will as we hoped. She only added a codicil to it, but what its nature is I am unable to tell you, for she took extreme care to prevent me from glancing over it, although I affixed my name to it as a witness.

"A messenger will be sent to the Glades to warn Mr. Lopez and his daughter of what has happened here, and I shall send this by him. Come as soon as possible, as there is no farther reason for keeping yourself in the background. A. L."

The party at the Glades were at breakfast when this missive was placed in the hands of Fenton, and at the same time a note from Mrs. Hawks's physician conveyed to Mr. Lopez the information of his sister-in-law's decease.

He read it, and coolly said:

"So poor Eunice has gone before me at last. I would give a great deal to know if she left her will unaltered."

Inez dropped her fork and grew pale.

"Oh, papa, it cannot be so! My aunt seemed no worse when I saw her yesterday."

"She is dead, child, and I am afraid that she has gone to her account with her injustice to you added to her other sins."

Inez rose from the table and went into her own room.

Fenton then showed his cousin's note to Mr. Lopez, and ordered his horse to be brought round as soon as possible.

Inez, white and tearful, spoke to her lover through an open window as he was about to mount.

"I shall follow you to Newport as soon as the carriage is ready, for I must show every respect to my poor aunt."

He drew near the window, and, taking her hand, tenderly said:

"Keep up your spirits, dearest, for I trust that all will be well. Mrs. Hawks discovered how false Rosa Gordon was in time to undo what she had done in her favour. My cousin's note tells me that she will not get the Horton estate. I cannot stop to explain now, but I hope the best for you. *Adieu!*"

Inez wept a few tears, but the harshness of her aunt had not inspired her with very deep affection for her, and she felt more shocked than afflicted at her sudden demise.

The voice of her father summoned her to his side, for Mr. Lopez was in too great a state of excitement to do without a listener.

When she joined him he laughed, clapped his hands, and exhibited such signs of exultation that the poor girl was deeply wounded. She pitifully cried out:

"Oh, papa, I do hope that you are not rejoicing in this unseemly manner over my poor aunt's death!"

"No, no. I hope that I am too good a Christian to do such a thing as that, Inez. I am as sorry for Eunice as can be expected, considering our feelings to each other. You know they were never very friendly, but we'll let that pass on this solemn occasion. What I am exulting over is the defeat of that girl. She has lost her chances now, and all through Fenton's cleverness. That charming Mrs. Langley you told me of meeting in your aunt's room is a relation of Godfrey's, and she found means to convince the old lady how hollow all Miss Gordon's pretensions of affection were. Eunice revoked the bequest she had made in her favour, and she may have been just to you at last. Isn't that enough to inspire me with the brightest hopes for you? I shall live to see you the mistress of Oaklands yet."

"Dear papa, don't talk of enjoying my aunt's possessions now, if you please. It wounds me to hear you speak so, and I am afraid that I am not worthy to claim them, even if they should eventually fall to me."

"Nonsense! Don't be aping humility, child, for it is not to my taste. Who is worthy, I should like to know, if such a girl as you are is found wanting? But there is the carriage coming round—get your bonnet and go at once; but be sure to come back as

soon as possible to tell me everything that occurs. I must be taken in to hear the will read, I suppose; but I cannot attend the funeral, for of course she will be buried at Oaklands, and it will be impossible for me to make so long a journey as that in my condition."

Glad to escape from his comments, Inez hastened to prepare for her visit, and after providing all that her father required she kissed him, and set out for Newport.

Dick, as anxious as herself to reach the scene of action, drove rapidly, and in a short time Inez found herself at the door of the private entrance leading to Mrs. Hawks's apartment.

Fenton was on the look-out for her arrival, and he conducted her to Mrs. Langley's parlour. That lady received her with the most affectionate *embrace*, and gave her an account of what had occurred in her aunt's room after her last seizure, though she wisely left it to Fenton to withhold or explain to his betrothed the cause of Miss Gordon's sudden overthrow in such a manner as might seem best to himself.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Rosa did not awake till a late hour of the morning from the heavy slumbers induced by the dissipation of the previous night, and the quantity of champagne she had drunk.

When she looked at her watch she was startled to find that her usual hour of going to Mrs. Hawks had long passed, and she wondered why she had not been summoned to her presence.

After making a rapid toilet she was about to issue from her chamber when Mrs. Perkins came in, wearing a most lugubrious expression of face. Rosa glanced at her and inquired:

"What is the matter, Mrs. Perkins? Has anything happened to distress you? and why was I not called before this? Is it very late, and I am afraid that Mrs. Hawks needed me while I was oversleeping myself."

"She won't never need you or anybody else any more, Miss Gordon. It's all over with my poor mistress at last. She went off in one of them convulsions, and I thought it was no use to call you, seeing that you were up so late last night in Mrs. Langley's room."

The storm of anger that was gathering on Rosa's brow at the avowal of such neglect recoiled before the woman's last words. She sank back, pale and trembling, but she quickly recovered herself, and ferociously cried:

"How dared you let me sleep when my dear old friend was dying? I am sure she would have desired to see me if she could have spoken. It was a most unheard-of piece of insolence in you to let such an event happen without even informing me of the danger."

"It wasn't my business to be coming after you. She would never let you be called up in the night when she was well enough to have a will of her own, and how was I to know that this attack would prove fatal any more than others before it? As to my insolence I don't recognize your right to talk to me in such a way, miss, and what is more I won't put up with it."

"How are you to help yourself, Mrs. Perkins?" asked Rosa, disdainfully. "Since Mrs. Hawks is dead I am in a position to make you feel my power, and I would advise you to be more respectful to the heiress of her fortune. If you do not know that her will was executed in my favour I do, so you had best consult your own interests by keeping on fair terms with me."

Mrs. Perkins felt sorely tempted to tell her what had passed in the room of the departed lady only a few hours before, but Fenton had warned her not to do so. When the will was read Rosa would learn the truth, and that would be time enough to enlighten her.

So the irate woman bridled her tongue, and, bowing with ironical respect, replied:

"Perhaps you're right, miss. We won't talk about business afore her that's gone is safe under the earth, poor lady. I only came in to tell you what had happened, and to say that your breakfast has been waiting some time."

Rosa went into the parlour where her solitary meal was served, but she had no appetite. She lingered over the table because she felt a thrilling dread of entering the chamber in which lay all that remained of Mrs. Hawks.

She had a vivid horror of death. To her it was annihilation—a return of the body to the earth whence it sprang, for she had no comprehension of the sublime doctrine of the resurrection. Material in every pulse of her being, Rosa felt within herself no assurance of immortality, and the faith which education had sought to inculcate bore no fruit.

She at length however summoned courage to enter

the darkened apartment and approach the cold body that lay upon the bed dressed in the rich robes of costly fashion which had once decked her as a bride.

Mrs. Hawks had preserved this dress for its present use, and she had exacted from her attendant a promise to array her in it for burial; and if anything could have added to Rosa's horror of death it was the sight of that worn and faded form tricked out in satin and lace and decked with artificial flowers.

Mrs. Perkins had shrunk from placing the coronet of pearls which had formed the bridal coiffure upon the gray hair of the poor old woman, and in its place she had tied on a plain tulle cap trimmed with white ribbon; but she now spoke and gave a different reason:

"She wore a set of pearls when she was married, Miss Gordon, but as they were locked up in the casket where the will was put, and she told you to open it yourself after she was gone, I thought I had better not meddle with 'em."

"You did perfectly right, Mrs. Perkins. The jewel casket must not be opened except in the presence of the lawyer who drew up the will. What have you done with the key to it?"

"Here it is, miss, sealed up in this paper; and as you are more interested in the will than anyone else, if what you said not long ago be true, you had better put it in a safe place yourself."

Rosa took the key and placed it with the casket in the cabinet in which the latter was kept. She locked that, and, after putting the key in her own pocket, turned again towards the corpse. She vainly tried to repress the shudder that ran through her blood as she said:

"She was the best friend I ever had, Mrs. Perkins, and although I cannot cry and do as many other women would, I feel her loss very severely."

"I daresay, miss. And so do I, I am sure. I have lived with her for many years, and hard as she was to please sometimes, she had her good points. She was a generous woman too, and she ain't forgot neither of us, I know."

"I am sure she has not. Who has undertaken the arrangements about the funeral? I think that I should have been consulted before anything was done."

"I don't know about that, Miss Gordon. Mr. Lopez is the person to order everything, for he's her brother-in-law, you know, and he's sent in the young gentleman who is going to marry Miss Inez to do what he couldn't attend to himself. Mr. Fenton has already seen the undertaker, and arranged to have Mrs. Hawks taken to Oaklands and buried in the family grave."

"Mr. Fenton?" repeated Rosa, with flashing eyes. "Is it possible that after all I told her that Miss Lopez has again received into favour that false man? And is he intruding himself here to control what I, as the heiress of Mrs. Hawks, am certainly entitled to manage in my own way?"

"How do you know you are the heiress?" brusquely asked Mrs. Perkins. "Did you listen at the door the day the will was made? But heiress or not, you're not the person to dictate where that poor old woman is to be buried, while she has relations to look after the last that can be done for her. Miss Inez has come here, and she's in Mrs. Langley's room. Among them they had decided on what was to be done, before I came to wake you up."

Smothering her indignation at the rudeness of the speaker, Rosa haughtily said:

"I must submit to this indignity for the present, but it will not be long before you will all understand that it would have been as well to treat me with more consideration. I will return to my own room now, and remain in the seclusion that best befits my feelings till the time arrives to pay the last respect to the remains of my dear old friend. I suppose that I shall at least be informed when the funeral is to take place."

"I suppose so, of course; but I can tell you now what arrangements have been made. The body will be taken to Oaklands in the morning, be buried in the afternoon, and we may not come back till the next day. Mrs. Hawks hadn't many friends, but I suppose hers and those of Mr. Lopez will see her respectably buried."

"I suppose so," was the listless reply. "And now I will retire to my own room. I do not wish to be disturbed, as I feel the need of repose and thought after the dreadful shock I have sustained. I am not fit to share your duties, Mrs. Perkins, so I hope you will not think hardly of me for leaving you alone with the dead."

"By no manner of means, miss. You can go as soon as you like, for I ain't nervous nor nothing of that sort in the presence of what we've all got to come to some day."

Rosa shivered and hastily left the room.

(To be continued.)

THE SULTAN CENSURED.—The Sultan whilst at Buckingham Palace had a lamb brought to the palace every morning, which was slaughtered there by his butcher after a certain ceremony had been performed over it. Fowls were also killed in the same fashion. The Sultan always dined alone. There was a special dinner prepared for his son, who also dined alone, as did his two nephews. Several other separate tables were laid for members of his Imperial Majesty's suite, according to their official dignity. The rule was broken through on the occasion of the luncheon with the Queen at Windsor Castle and dining with the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House, for which, we understand, he was rebuked by his High Priests; so that a Sultan may be insulted.

ALONZO.

"We all have our trials," said Mrs. Tressler, behind her laced pocket-handkerchief.

Now when a woman makes that particular assertion, in that particular tone of voice, it becomes altogether and utterly transposed. It does not mean "We all have our trials," it means, "Nobody ever had, or ever will have, such trials as I am called upon to endure." So at least Mrs. Dyer understood it, for she exclaimed, eagerly:

"Do tell me what you mean, dear! Is Mr. Tressler unkind to you?"

"Oh, he's kind enough, as far as that goes," sighed Mrs. Tressler again behind the laced pocket handkerchief. "Yes—he's uniformly kind."

"He doesn't—gamble?"

Mrs. Dyer dropped her voice mysteriously on the last word.

"No; I don't think he has a single bad habit; not one."

"Well then, what is the trouble?"

"Nothing, only—I am miserable."

"But why are you miserable?"

Mrs. Tressler would not tell why she was miserable, however; she only took refuge behind the general statement that "life was full of trials, and she couldn't, of course, expect to be exempted from her share."

"But, Sarah, what do you mean?"

"Nothing."

And in vain Mrs. Dyer coaxed, argued and reasoned. When finally she arose to take leave Mrs. Tressler cried, kissed her and protested more vehemently than ever that "nothing" was the matter.

"Come and see me soon again, dear," sobbed Mrs. Tressler, "for I am—so—unhappy!"

"I'm glad I'm a woman," said Mrs. Dyer, as she went away. "For, otherwise, I should get thoroughly out of patience with the sex."

So Mrs. Tressler went back to the cheerful room where the piano was holding out its ivory fingers to welcome her, and the merry sunbeams emitted a golden light upon the crimson roses of the carpet, the parquet swung on his porch like a tropic burst of scarlet flame, and Mrs. Tressler sat down in the gloomiest corner she could find, to cry.

Some people are born to trouble—some have their troubles thrust upon them—and some people make their troubles for themselves. And to this latter class belonged Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Tressler.

"It's three o'clock," said Mrs. Tressler, the next day, looking at the enamelled toy she called a watch, "and Alonzo is not home yet! He is never punctual now. Home and wife have alike lost their power to please. Oh, dear, if I had only stayed at home with mamma. An unloved wife has nothing to live for; I only wish I was dead and out of Alonzo's way!" At this very identical moment Mr. Tressler was inserting his key in the latch of the door.

"She never comes running to meet me now," mused Alonzo, knitting his Jove-like brows. (Jove-like, we suppose, means square and massive, and rather sulky!) "Well, well, I know I'm old, twelve years older than she is, and I ought to have known better than to marry a little blue-eyed blossom like her. Hullo! young Jones's card on the hall table! What's he coming here for two or three times a week? He's young and I'm not—that's the long and short of the matter, and I ought not to blame Sarah—poor little Sarah!"

So, by way of not blaming Sarah, Mr. Tressler stamped savagely into the room, with his Jove-like brows very much contracted and his head erect, without noticing his wife's presence in any way.

"Good-afternoon," said Mrs. Tressler. She had risen with the intention of running into his arms and sobbing out her griefs upon his breast, but she saw that this was no fitting time for wifely confidences.

"Oh!" said Mr. Tressler. "Good-afternoon."

"I suppose you did not see me," said Sarah, with cutting irony.

"Yes," said Alonzo, "I saw you. Will dinner never be ready?"

"I am not the cook," said Mrs. Tressler, biting her lip very hard.

"Oh!" said Mr. Tressler, scowling, and a silence ensued. "Has anyone been here this morning?" he asked, at length.

"Several persons."

Tressler ground his teeth. "She won't mention young Jones, of course."

Sarah looked very pretty as she sat near the window with her golden bright hair and her blue eyes humid with the tears she would sooner have died than let fall, and Mr. Tressler remembered with a pang how very good looking Clarence Jones was, while he—Pshaw! a stout, burly, red-faced man, more like the comic pictures in the weekly papers than anything else—what had he to boast of?

"I'll bring this matter to a focus, or I'll know the reason why!" he said to himself.

So, after striding up and down the room twice or thrice, he stopped abruptly before the little figure in purple muslin.

"Mrs. Tressler, I am going out of town this evening."

Sarah started and her colour rose in a scarlet tide to her cheek. But she repressed all sound, or external show of emotion, and sat, motionless as a statue, with her eyes fixed abstractedly on the pink little tips of her fingers.

"Yes?"

"And I do not exactly know how long I shall be gone—perhaps a month, perhaps longer."

Still Sarah made no response.

"If you'll pack my shirts, ma'am, you'll do me a great favour," said Mr. Tressler, with an excess of politeness.

"Oh, certainly," said Mrs. Tressler, walking gracefully out of the room.

"By Jove!" ejaculated Mr. Tressler, smiting his forehead with his clenched hand, "she don't care two straws. She seems relieved rather than otherwise. Perhaps—what is this?"

He stooped to pick up a slip of rose-coloured paper that lay on the carpet near where Sarah had been sitting. On it were pencilled two lines:

"DEAREST:—I'll come to-night.—J."

If Othello were a fat man, middle-aged, and rather rubicund, Mr. Tressler must have looked very like him in this moment of mad jealousy and unreasoning rage.

"I see it all," foamed Mr. Tressler. "As sure as my name is Alonzo Tressler, I'll be made a fool of no longer!"

"Dinner's ready, sir, if you please," said the servant, courtesying at the door. "And missis says she's busy packing your things and therefore cannot come down."

"Let her stay upstairs, then!" muttered Alonzo between his set teeth. "No wonder she shrinks from meeting my gaze, even though she is unaware that I possess this incontrovertible proof of her falsity. 'J.' indeed! 'J.'!"

"Sir?" said the girl, turning as her master hissed out the obnoxious initial, under his breath.

"Nothing, girl—depart!" cried Mr. Tressler, tragically.

And Betsy went downstairs to confide to cook "that master seemed clear out of his head like, and she wouldn't wonder if he had a spell of brain fever yet! Her Uncle Simon was attacked so!"

Meanwhile Sarah was crying over the shirts and pocket-handkerchiefs, and sobbing as she paired the neatly mended stockings.

Presently up came Betsy. Mrs. Tressler thrust her head into the drawer, lest the girl should see the traces of recent tears.

"Master's compliments, ma'am—and is his valise ready? He ain't got but five minutes."

"It will be ready in less time than that, tell him, Betsy."

"Will he come up to say good-bye?" thought the wretched little wife, as she put in the dressing-case and the last collars, and drew the straps of the valise. "Here he comes now—and I will kiss him and beg him not to leave me in this way, if he has ever loved me."

She rose with beating heart and carmine cheeks, as a step sounded on the staircase. But, alas, it was only Betsy.

"Master wants the valise, ma'am."

Mrs. Tressler pointed to where it lay, and Betsy carried it downstairs. When she was gone the wife stole to the top of the stairs and peeped quietly over the balustrade.

"He will come—I know he will come!"

But Alonzo put his hat sulkily over his brows, took the valise, and walked straight out of the house without even an upward glance. Sarah ran to the window and watched his figure receding in the sum-

mer twilight, until she could no longer distinguish his portly outlines.

And then she burst into an hysterical passion of tears.

"Oh, if I were only dead and at rest! How could I be wicked enough to let Alonzo leave me without a single word of farewell?"

She sprang up and rang the bell with an energy that brought Betsy, panting, from the subterranean depths of the kitchen.

"Betsy, do you know in what direction your master intended travelling?"

"He was going to the — Station, ma'am."

"Then I'll follow him," murmured Mrs. Tressler, flushed and excited. "Bring me my things, Betsy—don't lose a single moment."

"It's the brain fever, sure enough, and missis suspects it and don't want to let him out of her sight," pondered sagacious Betsy, as she ran hither and thither, accomplishing the least possible amount of work consistent with the greatest possible confusion.

"Haden't I better go with you, ma'am? Maybe he won't be easy to manage?" suggested Betsy, as her mistress seated herself in the carriage she had summoned, according to the orders hurriedly given.

"Certainly not," said Mrs. Tressler, with a look that destroyed Betsy's budding hopes. "Drive to the — Station, coachman, as fast as possible."

It still wanted eight minutes of the starting time when Mrs. Tressler reached the station. She hurried through the various waiting-rooms, and soon passed by the crowded carriages, anxiously glancing into the face of every passenger, but without the longed-for result.

"He has deceived me," thought poor Mrs. Tressler. "Oh, what have I done to deserve such treatment at my husband's hands? Perhaps he has deserted me, never to return."

She sank down, pale and trembling, on one of the comfortless wooden benches in the waiting-room.

"My dear Sarah, what is the matter?"

It was her brother, who had come in to ask some questions relative to the change of time on the — road, and was astounded to find his sister there in almost a fainting condition.

Sarah sobbed out her trouble, and was surprised to see the matter-of-fact calmness with which Harold Drew listened.

"You're a simpleton, my dear," said Harold. "Perhaps he has changed his mind—possibly he has gone back for something that he had forgotten!"

"No," said Sarah, in a husky voice. "I shall never see him again, Harold, and it's all my own fault."

"Nonsense," said Drew, cheerily. "Let's go home, Sarah, and ten to one he'll be there, wondering what has become of you!"

Mrs. Tressler shook her head, but allowed Harold to lead her back to the carriage, crying all the way home, greatly to the consternation of Harold, who, in common with other gentlemen, abhorred the sight of woman's tears.

And what was Mr. Tressler about all this time? Had the earth swallowed him up, or had he vanished like an exhalation into the air? We shall see.

At this precise moment—fifty-eight minutes after six—Mr. Tressler was rattling over the roads in a cab, roaring anathemas at the laggard coachman.

"Make haste, cabman!" shouted Alonzo. "If you don't land me at No. — St., by seven o'clock, I won't pay you."

"All right, sir," responded the man.

And it was seven by the chiming bells, to an instant, when Tressler sprang out on the pavement opposite his own house.

"Now I'll find out what young Jones and Sarah are about," thought the jealous husband, as he rushed upstairs into the drawing-room.

There was a lady sitting alone in the recess of the window, but it was not Sarah, it was Mrs. Dyer.

"Where's my wife?" breathlessly demanded Mr. Tressler.

"Exactly what I was going to ask you," exclaimed Mrs. Dyer, eagerly. "Betsy says she drove away in a carriage fifteen minutes ago. I had an appointment with her at seven this evening."

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Tressler, drawing out the rose-tinted note, "you are not the J. who—"

"I am the J. whose initial is signed to that note," said Mrs. Dyer. "Julia, you know—Julia Dyer."

Mr. Tressler stood aghast.

"Do you know, Mrs. Dyer," he said, in a loud voice, "I—I thought it was young Jones."

Mrs. Dyer burst out laughing.

"What, Mr. Tressler—you jealous! and of Sarah too, who doesn't know the meaning of the word."

"I'm foolish," acknowledged Tressler, with charming candour. "But, Mrs. Dyer, do advise me—what am I to do? Where has she gone, my poor

little Sarah? Do you think she will come back? Shall I—"

Alarmed as Mrs. Dyer seriously was, she could not help smiling at the comical trepidation—the unreasoning bewilderment of the bereaved husband; and while she was considering what advice to give another carriage drove swiftly up to the door.

"Here she comes now—"

"With young Jones?" gasped Alonzo, who had caught sight of a masculine figure beside his wife's fluttering lilac scarf.

"No—with Harold Drew."

How Mr. Tressler got downstairs he could not tell; but the next moment he was face to face with pale, frightened, tearful Sarah.

"Sarah! my dear little wife!" he exclaimed, folding her in his arms.

"Oh, Alonzo, I am so glad!"

And Harold slipped past them, and went whistling upstairs to ask Mrs. Dyer the meaning of this curious matrimonial dispute.

"But where have you been, Sarah?"

"I went to the station to find you," murmured Mrs. Tressler. "Oh, Alonzo, it broke my heart to think I had let you go without a word of farewell."

"Did you think I could leave you so?" whispered the husband, smoothing Sarah's golden hair. "My own little frightened bird, how pale you are!"

"I have been so silly," said Sarah, half crying, half laughing.

"No, my dear," said Alonzo; "I was a brute and a blockhead."

"It was all my fault," faltered Sarah.

"No, it was mine," stoutly protested Alonzo.

And then they both went upstairs to join Harold and Mrs. Dyer.

With that eventful day Mrs. Tressler's trials terminated. Thenceforward both husband and wife spoke and acted the tenderness that was in their hearts, and allowed no particle of coldness to stop the warm current of every-day life and love.

"It is so easy to be happy if one only chooses to try," said Sarah. "Why have we never discovered the secret before, Alonzo?"

"I think we were both a little to blame, my dear," said Alonzo. A. R.

THE PNEUMATIC DISPATCH IN PARIS.—Some time ago experiments were made with a view to transmit letters from one post-office to another by means of subterranean pipes, the parcels being propelled by atmospheric pressure. Seven offices are now on the point of being connected by the new system; and it is highly probable, according to the Paris correspondent of the *Morning Post*, that the whole of the post-offices in Paris will eventually receive their letters by this process. The bags will travel at a rate of from 800 to 1,000 French yards a minute.

A RICH PAUPER.—An old woman died lately at St. Helier's who was supposed to be in a very destitute condition. Upon her box being overhauled after her death there were discovered 56 silk and stuff dresses, 30 shawls, 108 nightdresses, 127 chemises, 29 flannel petticoats, 48 towels, 108 pocket-handkerchiefs, 84 pairs of stockings, a quantity of print dresses not made up, 42 ties and neckerchiefs, 60 nightcaps, 24 skirts, 24 aprons, and 23 dress jackets. Many of the articles were quite new. In addition to these were found three canisters and a small chest of tea, a keg and a bag of sugar, and various other articles of food.

FROM A COTTAGE TO A THRONE.—The Empress of Morocco is a native of Chalev, near Dole, in France, where she was born on the 20th November, 1820, in a poor thatched cottage. Her name was Virginie Lantermier. She went with her parents in 1834 to Algeria, and the whole family were taken prisoners by the Moroccans. Her father was killed and her mother died a short time afterwards. The captors, dazzled by the great beauty of Virginie, spared her, and by a concurrence of romantic circumstances the Emperor's son fell in love with her and made her his wife. The Empress has since sought out and brought her three sisters to the Moroccan Court, to which they are now attached.

A FATHER SUE BY HIS CHILDREN.—A curious case is occupying one of the Paris law courts. It is an action in which the son and daughter of Georges Sand sued their father, M. Dudevant, in respect to certain property which he wishes to sell. M. Dudevant was the illegitimate son of the Baron Dudevant. The Baroness Dudevant, having no children of her own, took a strong liking to her husband's illegitimate son. In one will she divided her property into two portions, one of which she left to M. Dudevant, and the other to his two children, the son and daughter of himself and his wife Georges Sand. When he and his wife separated the Baroness Dudevant, it is supposed to mark her disapproval of

the children being left under the guardianship of their mother, altered her will, and left all the property to M. Dudevant. Practically, it is this will which is disputed by the children.

EIKASIA.

In a splendid sarcophagus of green Thessalian marble, Michael II. lay in the sepulchral chapel erected by Justinian, in the Church of the Holy Apostles. It was in the autumn that this emperor died, leaving the throne of Constantinople to Theophilus, his son.

Married at an early stage of his greatness to Euphrosyne, daughter of Constantine VI., he had suffered a degree of obloquy which he could not avert, in consequence of this marriage. Euphrosyne had already become a nun, when Michael saw her, as she was returning from matins, across the courtyard adjoining both convent and chapel.

From this time her image haunted him, night and day; and when, at length, he wielded the sceptre of state, his first act was to obtain absolution from the Patriarch of Constantinople, for the beautiful recluse to be transported from the cloister to the throne.

There were those who dared murmur against this desecration, as they termed it; and the sovereign's life was embittered, and perhaps his death hastened, by the reports that often reached him of the disapproval of his subjects. Euphrosyne, however, made as exemplary an empress as she had been irreproachable as a vestal, and mourned her husband's death with as true a grief as if she had been the bride of heaven. All her remaining affections centred in her son, who ascended the throne when his father died.

To please the fastidious taste that characterized the new emperor, and, perhaps, to guard him against the temptation of invading the sacred cloister for a wife, the empress assembled all the most beautiful and graceful among the maidens of Constantinople to a fête in her own private apartments. Previous to their coming she informed him of her object, and desired him to select a new empress from among the many fair and high-born maidens who would grace her levée on that evening.

Perhaps it was only a whim that prompted his quick answer; but he eventually carried it out, in a way that accorded with his quaint and quiet humour. Seizing an apple of pure gold from among the superb fruitage that formed the costly ornaments of his mother's cabinet, he said:

"Look, mother! I will openly present this apple to the maiden who meet shall meet my approbation in your circle this evening; and that maiden, whoever she may be, shall share with me the throne of Constantinople."

The empress approved, and they separated, to meet again when she should be surrounded by the flower of beauty and grace in her own apartments.

The evening shades were deepening into darkness, when a young and very beautiful girl, dressed with fairy lightness and taste, stood before the massive steel mirror which gave back her flashing eyes and crimson cheeks almost as distinctly as do those of our own times. She was robed in a long, trailing garment of transparent silver tissue, looped up at one side with a knot of white flowers.

The shoulders were partially bare, and the short sleeve was gathered up by a single spray of delicate lilies.

Across the bosom the robe was drawn into graceful folds, parting in the centre and decorated with flowers.

The hair was braided into a heavy knot at the back of the head, and a wreath of tiny green leaves encircled the knot.

Except the flowers there was no decoration. All was in the strictest simplicity, but an air of indescribable elegance and refinement pervaded her whole appearance.

As she stepped from before the long mirror she met the eyes of a young man, bearing a strong family resemblance to her, fixing themselves earnestly and admiringly upon her.

"You will go with me, Justus?" she asked, as he approached her.

"If it is your pleasure, Theodora. I am only too happy to attend you." He bent towards her, and whispered, "If I could but know that I might hope for your presence always—"

"Hush, Justus! I think you must remember that the subject is forbidden as one likely to destroy the bonds of friendship between us."

"And is friendship all that I must hope for?"

"All! Methinks it is a great boon, the true and pure friendship which I have described. Besides, are you not my own relative—nearer than any save a brother? Sisters' children we are, Justus." And she laid her white hand upon his arm with a sisterly

freedom that disarmed him of all resentment towards her. "You will go?" she asked again.

"Yes, Theodora—and as a brother only, if that is all that you can desire me to be to you. But I shall make a sorry attendant."

The two passed out together, and just as they were about to enter the quaintly decorated Greek chariot another chariot, with wild, prancing horses, nearly run against them.

"That is Eikasia's carriage," said Theodora, when her momentary fright was over. "Did you observe what a beautiful thing it is?"

"I saw that it was built in the form of a sea-shell. Eikasia has taste as well as beauty."

"Yes—and oh, Justus! how grandly beautiful she is—how full of glorious strength and majesty! Do you know that I shrink away into nothing beside Eikasia? She seems to overshadow me with her commanding presence."

"And yet," said Justus, passionately, "one hair from that golden braid exceeds her charms."

"Nonsense! Do you think me so vain to trust such rhapsodies, my good cousin?"

When Justus and Theodora entered the great reception chamber of the empress, Eikasia was already there. She was dressed magnificently in a rich green robe, embroidered with gold stars. On her head she wore a brilliant coronet, composed of gold and emeralds. Her train was three yards in length, and was of white satin, bordered with gold stars on a green ground. A broad girdle, in which gold was curiously interwoven, confined her loose robe in folds around her waist, and a chain of emeralds drooped from her white throat, setting off its exquisite fairness.

A pale, olive hue was faintly lighted up with a struggling crimson, but it was the eyes that lighted up the wondrous face—the deep, passionate eyes, whose glances seemed absolutely to burn with the fires of the spirit within. The long lashes that shaded them rested on the cheek; and the dark eyebrows were pencilled so evenly that every hair lay in its own place, and seemed as if it could not be spared from the general effect.

Eikasia's hair was of that peculiar tint of purplish black that is at once so rare and so beautiful; and, unlike Theodora's, she wore it in long curls that fell over her face, partially concealing the passionate look that sometimes welled out from the very soul, in moments of her intensest enthusiasm.

Won by that look—for she wore it now—a person, entering the room, walked slowly past the others, who were standing in groups, or reclining on seats about the apartment, and stayed his footsteps only when he reached the spot where she was standing.

Addressing her in the grave and sententious tone adopted in the Greek fashion, he said:

"Woman is the source of evil."

Her quick eye caught sight of the golden apple. She divined immediately the cause of this, and the use to which he was to apply it, and her dark eyes glistened with a proud, yet happy expression, as she quickly answered:

"But woman is also the source of much good."

She turned aside to speak to Theodora, but her words were bitter and sarcastic now—for there was an air of sweetness and purity in Theodora's face that contrasted with her own passionate nature. The emperor, who saw it too, was disenchanted in a moment. All her beauty faded from before his sight, and he turned away.

What was it? Did her tones jar upon his nerves, or was he attracted to the other maiden, whose blushing cheeks attested her modesty, and whose intelligent eyes proclaimed her intellectuality? Who knows, save by what followed? The apple quivered in his hand. He advanced—stopped—went on, in Corporal Trim's own fashion, hundreds of years afterwards, and placed the bright, shining, but most indigestible fruit known since Eden, in the hand of the fair Theodora.

Never before had such a blow fallen on the self-complacency of Eikasia. The words died on her lips, and the tears forced themselves into those large black orbs that burned so brightly a few moments before. It was like the rain after the lightning.

She had not counted upon this.

When the emperor had entered she looked proudly around, and the memory of that last glance in the great steel mirror was still vivid enough to assure her that she would bear off the palm of beauty. Now the veil had fallen from her eyes, and she saw another preferred before her!

A few moments of that forced gaiety which disappointed pride puts on at first, to hide the keen pangs that are crushing it, and then Eikasia was gone; and the party, following her lead, as usual, broke up.

At the door Justus stood ready with a mantle of fine wool, to guard Theodora from the night air. She was trembling all over with the strong excite-

ment of the evening. Justus thought she was shivering, and he wrapped her up still closer. Could he have known that she was dead to him from that moment, the poor youth's constant heart would have bled deeply.

In the monastery of Santa Maria, Eikasia secluded herself from every eye save those of the good sisters and her confessor. She had felt the throb of ambition—she now wore the garb of humility. The brief day-dream had faded, but its going down had left none of those bright hues that the sun leaves at parting.

Henceforth life was painted for her in those sombre shades of gray that are too dull already to subside into any other tint. And while Eikasia composed and sang psalms, to cure the fever of a soul panting for the gift of love, the favoured Theodora was preparing to ascend the throne beside him who, had he not been emperor, would have equally shared her heart.

The Empress Euphrosyne, after her son's marriage, retired to a monastery to pass the remainder of her days in a spot which she regretted ever to have quitted. One farewell look at the sarcophagus of green marble, one sigh to the memory of Michael, and she was lost to the outer world.

Theodora accompanied the emperor on one of his visits to the neighbouring convent. A nun, clad in the deepest black vestments, attracted her notice by the height and beauty of her figure. Her face was almost entirely concealed by the broad bands which she, more than the others, had drawn closely around it.

But the full red lips, unfaded and blooming still, and guarding a row of pearls of unexampled beauty, brought to her memory the proud Eikasia, as she stood, waiting in the palace hall, for the distinction she was so sure would come to her.

Eikasia's eyes betrayed her emotion. The emperor spoke to her courteously, without remembering her, and the "last straw" was laid on the pride that had been her ruling passion.

She answered him in a low murmur that sounded little like the tone that so jarred upon his nerves when, years ago, the golden apple seemed so nearly within her reach.

We struggle, like wounded birds, against the destiny that seems so cruel—yet how recklessly we fling away the golden fruit that might be ours; and somewhere away among dim cloisters in which we have hidden our grief we sometimes catch a glimpse of our coveted prize in the hands of another. What wonder, then, if we beat the bars of the dreary cage in which we dwell?

R. S. C. B.

VIRGINIA.

CHAPTER XVI.

ALL night long Alfred Seymour gave himself up thoroughly to despair; he lay in that narrow cell—hard, cold granite on the floor, the walls and the ceiling, and cold iron shutting him in at the narrow door, which opened and closed with a clang that made him start and shudder from head to foot—all night long he lay, thinking such thoughts as might turn the hair on a young man's head as white as snow and excite little wonder.

A gleam of moonlight pierced through a long, narrow loop-hole that served as a window, cut so deep in the outer wall that the radiance came through wedge-shaped, and, to his tortured imagination, seemed solid in its whiteness.

No steel ever went more keenly through a human heart than that mournful illumination penetrated his. Only the night before those self-same moonbeams had shone like silver along the highway when Cora rode by his side, cheerful as a bird, animated as he had seldom seen her before, talking so hopefully of the early day when their marriage should be proclaimed and they need not steal forth in secret or at night to meet each other. She had even proposed to proclaim the choice she was so proud of, and end all secrecy at once. But he dared not accept this generous proposition, though enforced by eloquence and such affectionate ways as nothing but a heart shackled down by crime could have resisted.

This was only the night before. It seemed an eternity to him, there in that prison, with the stillness of death all around him. Thinking of her thus, generous, loving and so beautiful, the unhappy man made a solemn resolution. She should never hear of his fate; they might bury him within prison walls still more gloomy than those which now seemed to enclose him like a grave, and he would make no sign.

To-morrow, perhaps, they would bring him into court for examination.

He would plead guilty, and also when they brought him before a higher tribunal. No public journal should make a romance of his crime or his misery. He would allow the law to do its worst, and disappear.

This man had done wrong, but he was not a hardened sinner; no creature ever wept as he did that night.

He had longed to make atonement for his crime, and struggled hard for the power to do so, which was almost within his grasp when this ruin came upon him. This nearness to escape made his fate doubly bitter.

"A few hours—only a few hours, and I should have paid all," he said, aloud.

Then, frightened by the sound of his own voice, which seemed struggling up from the grave, he drew the coarse gray blanket over his head and lay moaning out his grief at intervals, lifting away from the moonlight, which reminded him so keenly of all that was wrested from him.

At last the dawn came peering through that loop-hole, filling the cell with gloomy light. Then a crash of locks and the heavy swing of iron doors fell on his ear ominously.

The routine of that mournful, tomb-like life had commenced, and every new sound made him shiver beneath that gray blanket like some wounded animal that hears the hounds scenting out his lair.

After awhile the door of his cell was flung open, a heavy can was set down on the stone gallery close by, and out of this vessel a tin cup half full of coffee was dipped, which, with a piece of bread, was placed near him.

Seymour drew the blanket away from his face and turned his bloodshot eyes upon this coarse breakfast. He was not hungry, and would have rejected the most dainty food—this he loathed.

Hours went by, and Brian Nolan came with a sorrowful heart, and again craved to know what could be done for his brother.

Nothing—Seymour had fully made up his mind now. The misery that fate had in store for him he would accept. Perhaps he might be happy enough to die.

Then that noble young creature who had loved him so dearly would regain freedom. She might—no, no, he could not think of a second marriage.

He was ready to die, and the other might follow, but it would be a long, long time—that grand-hearted creature was too thoroughly his.

He said all this to Brian, and charged him as he hoped for happiness never to betray the secret of his marriage to any human being, not even to Ellen; never to hint at his knowledge of it to the woman who in a fatal hour had become his wife; but, in every respect, to guard the confidence placed in him. Not content with a simple promise, he went farther.

There was a Bible in the cell. This he placed in Brian's hands, and bade him take an oath never to reveal the secret of his marriage or hint at it to any living soul.

Brian touched the book with his lips and took the oath.

"It is hard to ask this of me. Your wife has money and power enough to open these doors."

"To let the husband out she knows to be a criminal. Brian Nolan, the first look of her face after that would kill me. I shall plead guilty; there will be no trial. The officer promises me that there shall be no publicity. When all is over I will write two letters, one to her, one to the man whose vengeance is upon me. There is money belonging to him which he must have—a favour which he will grant if he be not a demon."

The mention of money reminded Brian of that which his sister Ellen and Miss Virginia Lander had promised to bring.

"What shall I say to them when they come?" he asked. "Is it too late, if I appeal to this cruel man with the money in my hand?"

"Yes. He has no power to save me if he wished. Besides, you cannot go to him. He, above all men living, must be kept in ignorance that I ever saw either of the Miss Landers. There is no appeal, no hope for me. Give up the thought, Brian."

Brian did so and went away broken-hearted.

Virginia and Ellen came to the house the day after, radiant and happy, with the money which Mr. Stone had paid over to them. Brian met them in the drawing-room, thanked Virginia with tears in his eyes, but refused to take the money. His brother had settled all his difficulties in another way. It involved a somewhat lengthened absence from town, he said, but everything was in a sure way of arrangement. Mr. Seymour had charged him a thousand thanks for her kindness, which he should feel to his dying day.

"Did he leave no word for me?" inquired Ellen, nervously. "Not even a farewell?"

"He left you this, and this," answered Brian,

pressing his quivering lips to her cheek and forehead.

Ellen knew that there was some terrible sorrow hidden beneath those kisses, but that delicate intuition which awoke her heart to the truth kept her silent.

Virginia, who had been so ardent in her efforts to serve Ellen's brother, was a little disappointed by the result, as any generous person might well have been. Still there was joy in the thought that they were at liberty to return home—that within a few hours she would meet Clarence Brooks.

They went by the first train. Virginia grew cheerful as she approached home. Would he expect her then? Was he disappointed because she did not return the night before? Had he told Cora and Mrs. Lander of their engagement? How would they feel about it, glad or sorry? She almost wished that it had been done before she left home. It would be very painful meeting their sneers or congratulations, whichever they might chance to prove, with no one but Ellen to sustain her.

These thoughts damped her joy, and when the train stopped at the station she had become nervously anxious. Ellen's grave face added to this feeling; this really was a trying ordeal to a young, motherless girl, who believed that the most precious secret of her life had been divulged to her worst enemies.

Eunice met them at the door; but no one else came with smiles or welcome. Mrs. Lander was in her room, she the servant said, and Miss Lander had gone out to ride on Blackbird. Ellen saw in Virginia's eyes the question she wished to ask, and demanded if Miss Lander had gone alone.

"Yes, quite alone; there had been no gentleman in the neighbourhood to ride with her these two days; a groom followed her, that was all."

Virginia went upstairs somewhat perplexed. Was Cora so annoyed by her engagement that she would not ride with Mr. Brooks? What could it all mean?

While they were taking off their things a clumsy knock was heard at the door, and Joshua Hurd came in. He beckoned to Ellen and retreated into the upper hall. Ellen went to learn what he wanted, when he placed a letter mysteriously in her hand.

"You must give it to her. He made me promise to put it into her own hands; but it's the same thing now, ain't it, when I give it to you?"

The letter, which Ellen took, was directed in a bold, firm hand to Miss Virginia Lander.

"Who gave it to you, Mr. Hurd?" she inquired, anxiously.

"Mr. Brooks; the one I took your letter to that rainy night. He came here yesterday morning, and, after sitting awhile with t'other gal, came to the stables—a thing he never did afore—and took a good deal of interest in the horses, specially Snowball, that I allays curry down myself. That morning he discovered that she'd been ridden since being rubbed down, and was curious about the mark of a saddle that was as plain as could be on her back. You don't know how that mark came there, do you now, Miss Ellen?" he headed, eyeing her keenly with his little sharp eyes.

"Me?—No, indeed. How should I?" answered Ellen.

"Exactly so; thought as much. Nor she neither?" Joshua pointed over his shoulder to the room where they had left Virginia.

"What, Miss Virginia? She hasn't seen Snowball these three or four days, I can answer for that."

"Exactly so."

"But what does all this mean, Joshua?"

"Nothing, only he said the boss must have been used or else I hadn't took good care on her, which made me mad. Used or not used, curry-combed or not curry-combed, it was none of his business, and I almost told him so."

"Well, Joshua, I don't understand about that; but the letter?"

"Well, he gave me that arter I'd put him down a little about the hoss, and a golden half-sovereign with it. 'Give that into Miss Virginia's own hand, don't let any other person touch it,' says he. 'I depend on you, Mr. Hurd.' Well, he might do that. If I ain't given it into her own hand, it was because she was dressing her hair afore the looking-glass, but it's all right now."

Ellen was turning away, when Joshua began again:

"Miss Ellen, what was the matter with Mr. Brooks? He looked so dull that I really felt sorry for him."

"How can I tell, Joshua?"

"Of course not. But you'll give that 'ere letter?"

"Certainly I will."

"Exactly so," muttered Joshua, walking through the hall.

Ellen went into the room where Virginia was standing, and gave her the letter.

"From him! from him!" cried the delighted girl, snatching it between both her hands. "I will be back in a minute, Ellen, and tell you all about it."

She went into the sanctuary of her own chamber, pressing the paper to her lips with both hands, as young girls will when the sweet feeling of a first love is upon them.

Ellen sat down by the window, wondering why her heart felt so heavy; she had fallen into thought about her brother, whose present position seemed to be so mysteriously kept from her, when a wild cry from the inner room, and directly after a heavy fall, made her spring from her chair in sudden dismay.

The next instant she was in the bed-chamber striving to lift Virginia from the floor with trembling arms, and crying out in her alarm:

"My lady! Virginia! Virginia! won't you speak to me? It is Ellen, your own poor Ellen, who loves you better than her life! What have they done to you, darling?"

In her distress the poor girl uttered the most pathetic terms of endearment.

She kissed that pale face, dropping unconscious tears upon it. She strove to warm the cold hands with her own trembling palms.

But all was in vain! Virginia Lander lay motionless; her lips ashen, her eyes closed firmly. Ellen at last believed her to be dead, and shrieked aloud:

"Eunice! Eunice! Oh! will nobody come?"

CHAPTER LVII.

SOMEONE entered the room and stood close by Ellen. It was Cora—returned from her ride; she stood motionless, grasping her whip tightly in one hand; her heavy dark cloth habit fell around her feet, stretching far out upon the floor, and the black hat shaded a frowning brow.

"This is hysterics, she had them frequently. Go and call Eunice—this shrieking will do no good. Go; I will take care of my cousin."

Cora stooped down to take the pale form from Ellen, but the little creature laid her charge upon the carpet, sprang upon Cora like a tigress, and pushed her half across the room, so entangling her feet in the riding-skirt that she almost fell. Then she left her, and, lifting Virginia's head, laid a pillow tenderly under it.

"Do not touch her, do not dare to touch her, unless you wish heaven's vengeance to fall on you at once! It will come—it will come!"

"Pale as death, and shaking her slender forefinger at the half-terrified woman, Ellen went in search of Eunice."

The moment she was gone Cora dragged the skirt from under her feet, ran to the door, closed and bolted it. Then she took up the letter, which had fallen from Virginia's hold, and tried to hold it firmly between her two hands, but they shook so violently that she could hardly see the writing. The struggle, however, of an iron will soon conquered this tremor, and she eagerly devoured each word as it seemed to flash before her eyes.

"No explanation—no loophole for her to creep through. Quiet, gentle; positive! My heavens, what a man this is! How dare she worship him?"

She heard footsteps in the hall, threw the letter down where she had found it, withdrew the bolt and flung the door open before Eunice and Ellen came in sight.

"She is getting conscious, I think. How she moans. What can be the meaning of this, Eunice?"

"The meaning—why the poor, sweet creature has fainted away! but what do you care about that, I want to know?"

"Ellen! Ellen!"

Those faint words came from Virginia, for into that loved name the moans on her lips had shaped themselves.

"It is not Ellen, but your cousin. Dear, dear Virginia, what shall I do for you?"

"Not a thing," Eunice broke forth, seizing upon Cora and lifting her to her feet, for she was half kneeling, "not a thing so long as I am here. Someone has almost killed this poor girl; I don't know who it is, but you shan't touch her."

Eunice then lifted Virginia from the floor as if she had been an infant and laid her tenderly on the bed.

"Now lie still and come to naturally, that's a good girl. No need of shutting those eyes like a scared baby. She's going away, knowing she ain't wanted for nothing. Here, Ellen, put your arm under her head and your cheek agin hers—no one but tried friends shall get near this bed now, I promise you."

"Ellen," whispered Virginia.

"What can I do?"

"Where is it?"

"What the letter?"

"Yes."

"Here, here; I took it from the carpet. Let me put it in your bosom."

"No, no, it would kill me!"

She pushed Ellen away with both her quivering hands, stretched herself suddenly and fell into another deathly swoon. When she awoke from that it was to the wild unconsciousness which heralds in the commencement of a brain fever.

The next few weeks were full of terrible apprehension to Ellen Nolan and Eunice. Joshua too hung about the house night and day, anxious and down-hearted, wanting to help, but too awkward for any real usefulness. Mrs. Lander shut herself up in her own room, and regarded Eunice with a frightened look whenever she came in from the sick-chamber, but asked no questions. This woman was becoming an abject coward, and had only courage to shut her eyes on what was in fact her own evil work.

Even in the insane ravings of that fever Virginia never mentioned the name of Clarence Brooks or spoke of Cora. Both Eunice and Joshua believed that this fever had been brought on by the wrong which Cora had committed by usurping her inheritance, a wrong in which they were compelled to participate or expose their own benefactress. This thought gave that rough woman many a sleepless night, and Joshua felt compelled, through all that long winter, to take a double portion of punch to keep away the dreams that haunted him, for, he told Eunice, nothing but liquor kept him from going into a consumption.

Eunice neither scolded nor sneered when he said this: she was too sad for ill temper now. All her fine dresses were packed away in the garret as a sort of self-punishment for her own misdoing. She went about the house like a ghost, and once, when Mrs. Lander noticed her face with those wild, sunken eyes as she came from the sick-chamber, the woman absolutely burst into tears.

How did Cora Lander act in this mournful state of things?

At first she was busy all the morning searching the daily papers for a paragraph that never appeared. This made her restless and ill at ease. She wanted some proof that her web, so artfully woven, had entangled its victim.

One day the express brought up a number of dresses for Mrs. Lander, and, in the unpacking, Cora fell upon a small paper which she had considered too insignificant for her notice, and which had, in fact, been overlooked by the officer to whom Clarence Brooks had left the task of silencing the press when Seymour's trial came on.

There was the paragraph. Her eyes seized it with the greed of a famished hawk.

"A young man, who gave his name as Seymour, was put upon his trial for embezzlement, and pleaded guilty to the indictment. His appearance and the frank avowal of his guilt excited general sympathy in the court room. Even the judge exhibited more than usual commiseration while sentencing the poor fellow, who was condemned to seven years."

This was the paragraph which Cora seized upon with such keen interest. She carried the torn paper to her room and read it over and over again.

"It is done! it is done!" she cried, racing to and fro in her room like a panther, hugging the paper to her bosom. "I willed it, and Clarence Brooks, the most splendid specimen of manhood I ever saw, has been the instrument of my freedom. I knew it would be so; but this game is but half played out. The next move shall secure him."

Even while she was speaking a knock came to the door, and when she opened it, impatient at the intrusion, a letter was placed in her hand.

"His writing, and to me. How dare this wretch presume so."

She tore the note open and held it a moment at arm's length, as if his hand had left poison within its folds.

The contents of this letter cannot be given, it would be too painful; but she read it, from beginning to end, with dry, hard eyes, that felt no pity; now and then a gleam of triumph shot through them; otherwise they shone with a heavy glitter, like dulled steel.

The letter told her of the anguish her husband felt in leaving her again. It might be for years, it might be for ever. He went into no details. He was going far away, he said, so far that she might not hear from him for many months, but he would write whenever fate permitted him. Something had happened, connected with his life, which compelled him to go—something which even the great love which he felt for her could neither overpower nor break through. His absence for a time was as imperative as his love for her would be immortal. He besought her to have patience with him, to pray for him sometimes, as he would ever pray for her. More there was of such sad, pitiful pleading for continued love as would have made any real woman's heart ache with sympathy.

Even Cora Lander felt a little compassion as she read the last lines of her young husband's letter, knowing where he was, who had sent him there, and how he must suffer. She sat for a time with the paper in her hand, conquering the last remnants of tenderness that evil thoughts and evil acts had left in her nature. Then she threw the letter into the fire and held it down with the poker till it was consumed.

I do not know whether compunction or triumph kept this woman in her room all the day after this letter was placed in her hands, but she refused to come down and see Brian Nolan, and when he sent to know if he were to wait for a reply she sent back a message that she was too ill for writing then.

Brian obtained an interview with his sister, who came from Virginia's sick-room to see him, but it was a sad meeting, for Ellen was weighed down by apprehension regarding her benefactress, and Brian had a secret aching in his heart which forbade him to give or claim sympathy.

So he went away heavy-hearted and so lonely that he longed to creep into some quiet place and die.

But he had another duty to perform, and that took him to the hotel where Clarence Brooks was staying.

When Brian entered the room where Brooks was sitting, there was bitterness in his heart which gave him both strength and courage.

He approached the desk where the young man was writing, and laid the letter he brought upon it without a word.

Brooks started a little, glanced at the boy and took up the letter.

He evidently knew the handwriting, for a stern look came over his face as he cut the envelope slowly, like a man who had made up his mind not to be moved from a settled purpose.

If he had expected prayers or entreaties in that letter, the contents deceived him, that was visible enough by the change of his countenance, for a slight colour came into his face and all its features softened as he read:

"I have wronged you, have wronged myself more by an act which makes me seem ungrateful. I thought you dead—as heaven is my judge and your avenger—I thought you dead and mourned for you, I did! I did! You will not believe it, but I would almost have given my own life if it would have availed to save yours on the day I robbed your desk. It was your heirs I wronged, not you, not you. Remember how I watched your sick-bed, how many sleepless nights I spent—how untiring was my love. The temptation was terrible; I cannot tell you what it was that made me thirst so for money. I dare not, though it was enough to overcome stronger principles than mine. Heaven help me!"

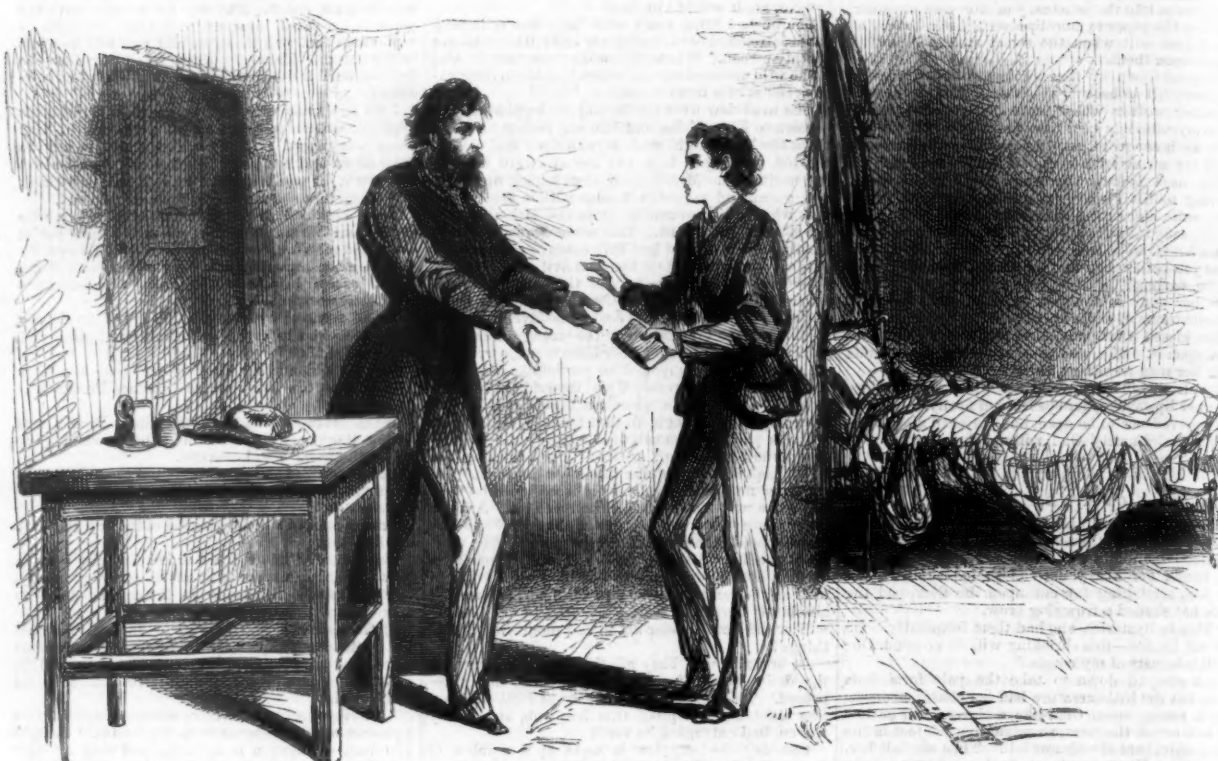
"Clarence Brooks, I loved you even when I wronged you—no, not you, but a memory that should have been sacred. I love you now, though you have taken such revenge for my fault as crushes me out of the world. I do not understand it—you never were hard of heart—never cared so much for money as to ruin a fellow creature because he deprived you of it. Something must have embittered you against me before you could have buried me alive in this terrible place."

"I do not complain. Having wrought out this fate for myself, I will endure it if heaven give me strength—perish under it if that be withheld. Do not think that I write to ask for mercy or excite the sympathy I have forfeited. It is not that which forces me to brave the pain of writing this; but I have a favour to ask—only one, so easy for you to grant, yet so important to me. I have some friends; the youth who brings you this is my own brother; I have a sister too—young, helpless, sensitive, friendless except in the love of one person. My fate is a secret to this poor girl and to all that ever loved me excepting my brother. He knows where I am and how I suffer; poor lad, I have been his worst enemy, yet he loves me, oh, how much better than I deserve! For the sake of this friendless boy—for the sake of my sister and of others not less dear, I ask you, Clarence Brooks, my once friend, to be generous and keep my misery, my crime and my disgrace a secret. Do not allow my name to pass your lips to any human being. This is the only request I shall ever make. Grant it, I implore you! Unless you would torture me to death in my living tomb, this small favour will not be denied."

"ALFRED NOLAN."

"For Seymour was an assumed name."

Mr. Brooks read the letter carefully, kindly; he had no real revenge to gratify here. What he had done was in behalf of Virginia Lander, who had not only wronged him, but was about to shipwreck herself for ever. The reader knows well that he never would have arrested this man merely for his crime regarding the money. But the reasons which had



[THE OATH OF SECRECY.]

prompted the act held good yet; nothing but the removal of this man from her path would keep a girl so infatuated from rushing on to her own destruction.

Brian Nolan stood by the desk looking earnestly into the man's face as these thoughts passed through his mind. When Mr. Brooks lifted his head those sorrowful eyes met his; they were full of unspoken reproaches.

"You will grant my brother's request?" he questioned.

"He need not have made it," said Mr. Brooks, kindly. "What I have done has been from a stern sense of duty—for the world I would not take one step beyond that. Say this to your brother; tell him I have done nothing in malice—that I have not an unkind feeling towards him."

Here the young man's voice faltered a little, and he shaded his eyes with one hand.

"Then I can take your solemn promise back to my brother in his prison?" said Brian, regarding this agitation with something like wonder.

"You may give him my solemn assurance that his wish shall be carried out. Unless he sends a message to me I will never mention his name."

"Thank you," said Brian Nolan; "thank you for him and myself. There is another thing; my brother left more than sixteen thousand pounds. It is your money; he charged me to pay it over. Here is a cheque for what there is in the bank. The rest I can obtain. Shall I send it here?"

Mr. Brooks took the cheque and tore it in fragments.

"I will not take a farthing of this money. It was not for that I arrested him—heaven knows it was not for that! Keep the whole of it for him; he will need it when he comes out."

"He will not live to come out," said Brian. "You have broken his heart."

The boy passed out of the door as he said this, leaving Clarence Brooks alone.

CHAPTER LVIII.

The winter came, sharp and cold, while Virginia lay ill; for the fever left her as helpless as a child, and the physician said that, without great care, she would sink into a decline.

This he suggested to Cora early in the season. Her system, he said, had received some great shock and refused to rally its strength again.

Unless something could be done to interest her, his skill would be of little avail.

If Cora were rejoiced by this intelligence, she took

good care to conceal it, for no person ever seemed more anxious than she did for the recovery of another.

Indeed, she haunted that sick-chamber with the pertinacity of a professed nurse, though warned by Eunice again and again that her presence was hurtful to the patient.

Fortunately for Virginia this affectionate farce only lasted two or three weeks, for after that time Cora persuaded Mrs. Lander to go with her to London, and she took up her residence at their old rooms at the hotel. She learned, with infinite satisfaction, that Clarence Brooks also had taken rooms there for the season.

This was true, but Brooks had no idea that Cora had made this house her residence, and was surprised when they met in the public drawing-room one day, some few weeks after Seymour's trial.

He strove to inquire after the welfare of her cousin with composure, but his voice shook in spite of himself, and he again thanked heaven that Cora was ignorant of the deep cause of interest he had in that unhappy girl.

She answered him very quietly, and with every appearance of unconsciousness that Virginia had been so ill.

Some disappointment seemed to have thrown her into a fever.

Probably the person who had given them all so much uneasiness had abandoned his pursuit of her after attaining the money he wanted.

She could only imagine this. But her cousin had been taken much worse after the boy who had been there once before came a second time with a letter, and for a few days was confined to her room.

There was no doubt some tendency to insanity in all this, for Virginia had taken a most unaccountable dislike both to her and her mother. As for herself, it was not strange; but a kinder mother never lived than her Aunt Lander.

So great had this antipathy become at last that the physician made it a particular request that they should both leave the house until some change took place.

This was the reason they had come to London. She wished people to understand all this, because it might seem unfeeling in a mother to leave her child during her illness if all the facts were not explained. The whole affair had been very painful both to herself and her aunt.

Clarence Brooks had no reason to doubt all this; he believed that no human being but himself knew of the identity of Seymour with the man who had

robbed him. He was also certain that Cora had no knowledge of his engagement or even acquaintance with Virginia; the manner and conversation of Cora Lander convinced him of her ignorance. In this respect it was fortunate that Ellen was so completely at variance with Cora and Mrs. Lander. That romance of the ravine, the sweetest of his life while it lasted, was sacred to himself and shared only by those two lonely girls. Of course Virginia was sad, of course she must feel the absence, or, if she knew it, the incarceration of her lover with such anguish as might naturally throw her on a sick-bed. But this was the result of her own mad infatuation; no human power could protect her from it. She had been wrested from this bad man by an act of legal power that made his heart ache when he thought of it; yet under the same circumstances he would have done it again, even though the girl had never been dear to himself.

Cora was very sweet and gentle when they met; you would have thought Virginia had appeared over again from her manners, for never on this earth was there a better actress lost to the stage. At her instigation Mrs. Lander invited Brooks to their rooms. There was no reason why he should not accept this invitation to intimacy with Amos Lander's daughter. The treachery of his niece could not affect that fair being. Had not his dead friend warned him against one and invited his love for the other?

He went to that pleasant room again and again. He saw that singularly gifted being in all the phases of her loveliness. There was no struggle in his bosom then; never in this world was there a more willing victim. If uncertain of his own feelings he soon became conscious of hers, for, with all her cunning, she could not conceal the absorbing passion that had entered her heart with such irresistible power.

Cora Lander was right in one thing; she had found her master passion in this love for Clarence Brooks. It would be impossible to give the details of that wicked courtship. The old intimacy revived; they spent half their time together; for Cora still pleaded her mourning as an excuse for avoidance of general society. She sent for Blackbird, and almost every afternoon a pair of black horses, with two of the finest-looking riders ever seen, were admired and commented on till it became generally known that Amos Lander's heiress was engaged to the distinguished-looking foreigner who was for ever by her side.

(To be continued.)



AMYAS AYRE.

CHAPTER III.

THE funeral rites were over. The cold clods had been laid over the pulseless breast of the owner of the great Wickford property, and the train of mourners and interested friends came back into the solemn library whence the coffin had been borne to hear the will.

The lawyer himself looked nervous and flurried as he unfolded the paper after removing the seals. The date was a surprise at the outset. It was only that very month, scarcely two weeks previous to this day. Mr. Granger coughed to hide a sudden fear, which seized him, but his forehead cleared again as, after the usual formalities, the will was read.

"I do give and bequeath to Arnold Wickford Granger, in remembrance of his name and my long friendship for his parents, the sum of ten thousand pounds, now deposited in — Bank in this town." Then followed small legacies to the various servants whose faithfulness he had appreciated, and a few souvenirs to valued friends.

"Finally, the residue and bulk of my property in real estate and moneys heretofore stated, not already allotted, I do give and bequeath to Aurelia Ireton, only daughter of the late Henry Ireton, and ward of my good friend Andrew Granger."

Had a rocket exploded in the midst of that solemn and formal group it could not have caused a greater shock. Mr. Granger involuntarily sprang to his feet with a smothered malediction. His wife pulled down her veil to hide the starting tears. Arnold controlled his features, but he was deadly pale and his lips compressed sternly. Barbara Leighton on the contrary flushed crimson and bit her lips, for once in her life startled from her self-possession.

There was one most startled of all, who stared around her wildly and gave deepest sign of consternation and grief.

"No—oh, no!" exclaimed Aurelia Ireton, springing to her feet. "I will never take it!"

The lawyer made a respectful but yet authoritative gesture and continued to read:

"I expressly herewith take away from the aforesaid Aurelia Ireton all right and power to give away the property, or in any way change or defeat the object of this bequest. But in case of her death without heirs I do demise and bequeath the aforesaid residue of my estate, in addition to the sum

[THE ONLY WAY.]

already given, to Arnold Wickford Granger. In witness whereof I do this day set my name and seal."

A dead silence followed the conclusion of this important document, which was broken by the lawyer, who rose from his seat and, coming forward to the interested group, said a few condoling words to the Grangers and made a brief but by no means hearty congratulatory speech to the heiress.

Arnold only bowed. He could not control his thoughts much less his voice. But his father spoke, hastily and indignantly:

"Have you any idea, Mr. Richardson, why and when this change was made—this most unprecedented, extraordinary change?"

"The new will was dated scarcely a fortnight since. Mr. Wickford was not a man to explain his motives even to interested parties. He gave me a sealed letter for Mr. Arnold Granger to be delivered after the reading of the will. Of course I am entirely ignorant of its contents."

As he spoke the lawyer opened his pocket-book, took out a letter and handed it to Arnold. The latter took it mechanically, opened it, and as he read a deep flush suffused his cheeks, and he bit his lip nervously. Everyone watched him with the most intense interest; but when he had finished it Arnold crumpled up the letter, walked to the table, struck a match, and held it over the flame until it crumbled into a little powdery heap of black ashes.

"Well?" exclaimed his father and Mr. Richardson, in one breath.

The young man tried to carry it off bravely; but his smile was a ghastly one, as he replied to the questioning eyes about him:

"Mr. Wickford's explanation is eminently wise and satisfactory. It is, moreover, private."

And, having said this, Arnold walked up to Miss Leighton, and offered his arm to escort her from the room. Mr. Granger followed, with his wife. Miss Leighton flung one keen, annihilating glance towards Relie as she swept past. None of the others gave a single look.

Relie started up as the door closed upon them, with a low cry.

"Are they going without me? Have they turned me away from their home?" faltered she, looking around her piteously.

"My dear young lady, this house with everything it contains is yours. You can make for yourself as splendid a home as you like," Mr. Richardson hastened to say, moved to compassion by her great distress.

She did not heed him, but crossed the room hastily, flew out at the door, and caught at Mrs. Granger's shawl just as that lady was stepping from the piazza to the carriage.

"Mrs. Granger, oh, Mrs. Granger, are you going to leave me behind?"

Poor Mrs. Granger's eyes were blinded by tears of indignation, and her heart swelled with grief at this terrible disappointment and mortification, this downfall of all her proud expectations for her son. She could only think of Arnold, and this humiliation before the very eyes of Miss Leighton. She answered, sharply, as she drew away her shawl:

"You can't expect it will be very pleasant, Relie, to have you with us. You, whom we have cherished and cared for like our own child, and to think how you have come between us and all our hopes. What can a woman do with such a fortune? and without it Arnold's best hopes are wrecked."

"It does seem, Relie, as if there had been some underhand work here. I remember now how you blushed when I came upon you in the street, talking with Mr. Wickford. I would never have believed it of you, but for this," chimed in her husband as he snapped his whip and drove off.

The young girl, standing on the steps of the fine mansion now her own, stared after them blindly; for, though there were no tears in her eyes, a swimming mist filmed her sight. She half stretched out her hands, and then caught them back. Arnold Granger, turning back to fold Barbara Leighton's shawl more closely about her, caught the dumb anguish of the gesture.

"One moment, please, Barbara," exclaimed he. "It is scandalous for us all to leave Relie without one kindly word."

And while he spoke he laid the reins in Miss Leighton's lap, leaped out, and ran back.

He came up to the steps, his face flushed, his eyes gleaming brightly, and caught her hand.

"Relie," said he, "you are not to blame—not in the least. You deserve all you have won, as I have met my just reward for my folly and wicked ambition. From the depths of my heart I am thankful that my loss is your gain. All the extent of that loss bursts upon me now, and the least, the very least, is this fortune. Heaven bless you, Relie."

So much he ventured to say, and then hurried back to the chaise, recalled by the restive horse, who fretted beneath Miss Leighton's angry jerk of the rein.

Aurelia Ireton looked after him wistfully, and her lip trembled, but she walked back steadily to meet

the lawyer, who scarcely knew what to say to her.

"If you please, sir, will you explain the will again to me? I do not think I fairly understand it."

"Certainly, my dear young lady. Come into the library. These people will soon be all dispersed. You are a very rich woman, with unlimited control of this great property."

"Unlimited control! Then I may give it to Arnold, as indeed I ought. How could Mr. Wickford have taken it away from him? Tell me how I can give it back so that it will be legal, and in every way correct."

Mr. Richardson coughed, and looked in a most mysterious manner. There was something in the eager, wistful, grieved face which touched even his flinty nature.

"But that is precisely what you can't do. Mr. Wickford evidently anticipated this generous act. You may spend as freely as you please upon yourself, but you cannot give away the property."

"And did he think such selfish self-indulgence would make me happy?" ejaculated Relie. "It was cruel to make me be the ruin of the best friends I had in the world. Will you let me read the will myself?"

"Certainly. There are the legacies yet to be attended to. I wished to call your attention to them."

He brought the document and read it through again, with a great deal of care, and patiently explained the legal terms. She was not satisfied until she took it in her own hands. Then, lifting it over her head, she asked, suddenly, in a fierce tone:

"And if I tear away the signature—if I burn the whole document—what then?"

He smiled calmly.

"It in no wise affects matters. There is an attested copy, and, moreover, the will has been formally read."

"And if I positively refuse to accept the fortune?"

"It will not help Mr. Arnold Granger in the least," answered the lawyer, a little impatiently. "You are an extraordinary young lady to be so anxious to find means for giving away this magnificent fortune, especially when, as I understand, you have none of your own. Of course you can leave it alone; but it is impossible for you to transfer it to Mr. Granger—unless, indeed," he added, with an amused glance into her face, "you marry him."

She flashed an indignant, haughty glance into his face, which recalled to the lawyer a fact he had nearly forgotten—that it was a young lady, and not a perverse and whimsical child, with whom he was dealing.

"Sir, Arnold Granger is to marry Miss Barbara Leighton!"

"True; I remember now. Well, he has a fine business; ten thousand pounds will not come amiss either, and Miss Leighton is said to be a great heiress. I don't see that the young gentleman's situation calls for much compunction on your part; and, at all events, you are entirely guiltless of any blame. I advise you to enjoy cordially the good fortune thrown in your path."

Aurelia had scarcely heard a single sentence. She had dropped the will on the table, and was leaning her head wearily upon her hand.

Presently she murmured, in a deep voice, with a little sob catching the breath—Mr. Richardson recalled it afterwards, with a pang:

"But if I die Arnold will get it again."

He was a little impatient and angry with her now, and said, coldly:

"If you please, Miss Ireton, I will show you the accounts of the household. There is a large sum of ready money in this pocket-book."

As he spoke he unlocked a drawer, and handed her a well-worn pocket-book. She took it in a dull, mechanical manner, and was dropping it into her pocket, when he remonstrated:

"But if you please I wish you to count the money and give me the receipt. Notwithstanding your extreme youth, Mr. Wickford has left you in entire control. He must have had an extraordinary opinion of your sagacity and prudence. But possibly he had no expectation of being so near death. He was very anxious you should find no difficulties in your way."

"His kindness was only cruelty, though he never meant it to be so. He makes me seem like a monster of ingratitude, the very instrument to deal a deadly blow at my best friends," answered Relie, collecting her thoughts, and trying to assume an interest in the proceedings. "But I will not vex you by postponing any necessary business. Count the money in the pocket-book, if you please, and I will attend to you."

He did so, and wrote a receipt which Aurelia signed.

"And here are the account books. You will find the bank cheques in this one. You have only to fill out, you know, and sign them to obtain any sum you need. I should advise you to retain the same business agent. He is faithful and honest. The housekeeper too is very anxious to continue in your service. You will find her in the room below, or I can send her to you as I go out. I promised Mr. Wickford to assist you all in my power, and I hope you will call upon me for any advice I can give. Once again, I beg you to put away this entirely unnecessary compunction of conscience. Mr. Arnold Granger had really no claim whatever upon Mr. Wickford which the legacy of ten thousand pounds has not amply cancelled."

"I thank you for your kindness," replied the girl, in that same grave tone of voice which made him think her strangely dull and apathetic. "You mean well, no doubt. It is all meant in kindness and I will try to be grateful for it."

"I will see you again to-morrow. Perhaps it will be pleasant for you to be alone to-day. Afterwards you can have any friends you choose for company. Make yourself at home, and ask the housekeeper to attend to your wants. Good-day now."

He bowed and withdrew.

Aurelia Ireton drew one long, quivering breath and clasped her hands across her forehead, pushing back wearily her brown hair.

Alone at last! A moment left undisturbed, able to think without distracted attention. She wrung her hands, and springing to her feet walked to and fro across the room, her face pale, her lips set firmly, her eyes flashing brightly with some strongly repressed emotion.

"No other way, only one," she said, at last, in a voice too deadly calm to be natural. "They all look and act as if I were envierly fortunate, wonderfully blessed, when it is only a mocking misery. Life is very hard, very hard, and I have no one to help me bear it. If they only knew how much more welcome seems the peaceful grave to me than this grim and stately home, this dreary life here. Surely if there be any wrong I shall be forgiven."

She paused abruptly, for there was a step outside her door, followed by a gentle knock.

"Come in," said Aurelia Ireton, dreading the interview even more than Mrs. Hinde, as that worthy woman came hesitatingly forward, and dropped a respectful courtesy.

"I am the housekeeper—Mrs. Hinde. I hope you will be satisfied with my late master's recommendation, and keep me in the house. I will try to please you, Miss Ireton."

"I have no desire to disturb you or any of the others from their situations here. You must miss Mr. Wickford very much," answered kind-hearted Relie, trying to coax her cold lips into a smile.

"Yes, in, very much; still, the house will be a great deal livelier and brighter now. He was ill always, and so quiet and still. It must be very different with a young lady in the house." Aurelia was silent. What could she say, whose thoughts were so far from all brightness? "But you must be faint from this long delay. I prepared lunch for a great many, and was sorry enough your friends didn't remain. Will you be kind enough to come down to the dining-room?"

"I should like a cup of tea. I believe I am faint," answered Aurelia, and followed her into the richly panelled dining-room.

The table was laid in great state. The late Mr. Wickford had been an unostentatious man, but he was a connoisseur in china; and the superb dinner service, with its massive silver, was all brought out, and a sumptuous dinner prepared, in the expectation that Arnold Granger would be master, and the aristocratic Miss Leighton, and all the family, would dine at the house. It struck even Mrs. Hinde as being rather dismal and forbidding when, in place of the anticipated brilliant party, this one slender little girl glided into the room, and seated herself in the first chair she reached; and as she caught a glimpse of the quivering lips and swimming eyes a dim suspicion of the sorrowful desolation of the great heiress whom everybody was envying entered the kindly mind of Mrs. Hinde, and stirred her to a sympathizing endeavour to soothe and cheer.

"To be sure we are rather lonesome here to-day; but it won't be long before you can have a happy circle around you, Miss Ireton. If you choose I will wait upon you myself, and not call in John."

"Thank you. I should like it better. I am tired and confused, and everything is so strange," began Relie, and paused abruptly, as her voice trembled.

"Oh, yes, I understand. I was nervous and flustered myself, but now you have been so good as to assure me I may try to please you enough to remain here, I am greatly relieved. Take this cup of tea, and I will give you just a slice of the game, a

little jelly and a trifle of the salad. I hope you will like the salad dressing. I'm quite vain of Jane's salad cream."

And while she spoke Mrs. Hinde had signalled to the anteroom, and the dinner appeared.

She had the tact which comes from a kind heart, and by dint of cheerful talk, and dextrous change of plates, coaxed the young mistress into something beyond the mere pretence of eating; and when she rose, at length, Aurelia turned towards her a grateful glance, and said, earnestly:

"I thank you, Mrs. Hinde. You are very kind. I hope you will always remain in charge here."

"I hope I shall please you. Indeed, I mean always to do my best," responded the housekeeper, a moisture creeping into her eyes, she scarcely knew why, unless that there was a pathos in the girl's voice. "And now would you like to see the house, or go directly to your chamber? You look very tired. I would advise a little rest. Perhaps Mr. Granger and his family are coming over this evening?"

"No, no one is coming. I am alone, all alone, Mrs. Hinde, and it was for that I thanked you; because you have been acting a mother's part to a motherless girl. I will lie down, for I really need rest."

But at the door of a stately chamber, with the first glimpse of its silken hangings and sumptuous furniture, the young heiress recoiled.

"Oh, no, not there," said she, with a shiver. "Let me go where I shall meet a cheerful, homelike look."

Mrs. Hinde turned without a word, and led her to her own chamber, a sunny, simply furnished room, and after making sure that her wants were all attended to left her to its solitude, murmuring:

"Well, to be sure, this is very different from my ideas. What a sweet, child-like creature! I needn't have alarmed myself about an imperious, haughty mistress. She really seems grateful to me—she, the owner of all this house and its great income."

Aurelia Ireton, left alone, hastily bolted the door, and fell down on her knees by the bedside. She did not speak a single word, nor weep, nor sob, only clasped her hands, closed her eyes, and laid her pale face against the snowy counterpane.

Full an hour the girl remained in that posture; then she rose and walked to the window and looked out. There was a fine nursery of choice fruit-trees, a grapery and small conservatory close at hand; beyond, there was a smooth green pasture on which cattle were grazing; then a grove, and, farther on, the bright gleam of running water—the river which went hurrying and dashing over the rocks. Her eye lingered on it wistfully, mournfully, almost pleadingly, as she whispered, hoarsely:

"It must needs be; but oh, it is very hard!"

And, as if the sight tortured her, she turned swiftly away and lay down upon the bed for rest.

Mrs. Hinde knocked lightly at the door something like an hour afterwards, but received no response. The second time she came the young lady was awake and admitted her. She wished for nothing and was evidently desirous of being left unmolested. She made some inquiry about the fastening of the outer door, asked for a lamp, and bade Mrs. Hinde good-night.

The latter stood a moment on the threshold after she had lighted the lamp and looked back upon her new mistress. She said afterwards, never without tears in her eyes, that something came across her then and there—a vague, shadowy foreboding of impending evil. Such a solemn look was on that girlish face, such deep, wistful yearning in the eyes, such unnatural sternness around her lips. However, she bade her good-night and went away. It was beyond midnight when a small, light figure stole noiselessly down the staircase; a desperate hand forced back the bolt and turned the massive key of the outer door, and the heiress of the great Wickford property passed over the threshold, went across the avenue, around the conservatory, speeding along as silently as a ghost. A great dog chained in his kennel sent forth a deep-toned growl, but she gained the pasture, skirting the grove, and at length stood alone under the solemn stars at the river's brink.

The waves plashed with a steady, earnest sound, which did not frighten, but rather encouraged her desperate feelings. They gathered force and strength as they swept on, and the roar of the water sounded through the stillness like a peal of distant thunder.

"If it be wrong may heaven extend mercy and forgiveness, because of this sore strait of mine!" ejaculated Aurelia Ireton, lifting her eyes upwards. "But it seems to me the only way. I give you back the coveted inheritance. Never—never again, Arnold Granger, shall you be troubled with any claim, look, or thought from poor little Relie! Farewell, Arnold—farewell for ever!"

A moment after a bird, nestled in the dewy boughs of a tree overhanging the river, sent forth a dismal cry, startled from his silence by a splash in the water. The waves took the gift, whatever it was, whirling, eddying, dancing along with it swifter and faster till one wild leap carried it far away. From the great house on the Wickford estate echoed the howl of the chained mastiff, but the stars above and the earth below kept solemn silence.

CHAPTER IV.

It was a cheerless evening likewise at the Granger cottage. Arnold did his best to appear unconcerned, and conceal his deep mortification and chagrin, but he could not thaw the icy reserve which infected the whole party. Miss Leighton, pleading a headache, retired early, and left her betrothed free to talk over with his parents this unexpected result of Arnold Wickford's death.

Mrs. Granger glanced sorrowfully from her son's lowering brow to her husband's angry face, and broke the silence with a dismal sigh.

"Oh, dear! who'd ever have thought it? What are you going to do, Arnold?"

"I don't see that there is anything to be done, mother. I shall stick to my business, and make as much of a fortune for myself as is possible."

"And ten thousand pounds in cash will be great help in your business after all. I wonder he left you so much as that," growled Mr. Granger.

"And then there is Miss Leighton's fortune," ventured Mrs. Granger.

"Don't depend upon that!" interposed her son, almost harshly. "I am a very different individual now. If she desires it I shall release her at once from the engagement. I don't mean to wait for her father to give me the hint."

"Was she going to marry you for the Wickford property instead of for yourself?" questioned his mother, indignantly. "You would insult her by implying such a thought. If she loves you what will she care about this property?"

"I have no complaints to make," answered Arnold, his lip curling. "Barbara has dealt as fairly with me as I with her. If this unforeseen experience has taught us both something, neither has the right to upbraid the other."

"And to think it should be Relie Ireton who has spoilt all your prospects! I declare nothing except the sky's falling could have startled and surprised me so."

"Poor Relie!" echoed Arnold, in a softened tone; "poor little Relie!"

"I don't see any occasion for your pity," observed his mother, in an acrimonious voice. "And certainly Relie is anything but poor, the heiress of all that great fortune—snatching it right out of your hand. And here have we been giving her a home all these years only for this reward!"

Arnold Granger came closer to her, and with a frown on his forehead answered, gravely:

"Mother, you are very unjust to Relie. In your grief at my loss you allow yourself to be unreasonable. Relie is in no wise to blame. He stated explicitly in that letter to me why the change was made, and it was solely and wholly because of certain movements of mine. I was sorry you were not kinder to her to-day; she felt it keenly. Besides, don't forget how the world will blame such resentment. We had really no right or claim upon the Wickford property. A few days will soften your vexation, and then you must go to Relie, and be, as heretofore, her kind and tender friend."

"If you had only taken a fancy to Relie yourself," said his father, bluntly, "it would have all been the same now."

Arnold had been balancing an ivory folder in his hand. It snapped in two pieces beneath his fierce grasp as he replied:

"Yes, sir, it would have been all right if I had. But I did not. There is only one thing left to us, to make the best of the present circumstances. And now I will say good-night to you. A night's sleep will improve us all."

But, judging by the faces that gathered around the breakfast-table the next morning, the spirits of none of them were above the evening's standard.

Miss Leighton was grave, silent, almost embarrassed, anxious only to return speedily to town. Arnold looked worn and pale, as if he had passed a sleepless night, while Mr. and Mrs. Granger were not only angry and indignant with other people, but vexed and dissatisfied with themselves.

Upon their formal, despoiled conversation broke suddenly a quivering, agitated voice:

"Mrs. Granger! Oh, Mrs. Granger! something dreadful has happened!"

Everyone started up nervously, and turned quickly towards the speaker.

Mrs. Hinde, pale and tearful, stood on the threshold. Arnold Granger was the first to dart forward. He seized her hand fiercely, and demanded, hoarsely:

"What has happened to Relie?"

"May heaven forgive her, the poor, unhappy child, and help you all to learn to be more charitable and forgiving!" sobbed Mrs. Hinde.

"Where is she?" demanded Arnold once more, shuddering while he spoke.

"She has drowned herself in the river! The body must have gone far away, for the little hat she wore was found below, and a part of her shawl fringe was caught in the bushes by the river bank. There is a letter on her table for you, Mr. Arnold Granger. Mr. Richardson told us to leave everything exactly as we found it, or I should have brought it."

"Drowned! Relie drowned!" repeated Arnold, in an icy voice of desperate calmness.

"Yes, sir. She never went to bed at all in the evening. We heard the dog bark, and the front door was unbarred. The poor, innocent child. It broke her heart that you should take the will so unkindly, and she took the only way left her to give the property back to you."

"Heaven forgive me! It will be impossible for me to forgive myself!" ejaculated Arnold Granger; and without a word or look for those behind he seized his hat, and rushed like a madman from the house.

"Follow him! follow him!" shrieked Mrs. Granger; "oh, this is horrible, beyond anything yet."

Her husband hurried after Arnold, and Mrs. Granger, with trembling hands, began putting on her shawl, bonnet, and gloves.

Mrs. Hinde looked after her with a stern glance, and sent rankling arrows into the smitten heart.

"The young lady thanked me for being kind and motherly to one deserted by all her friends. Oh, my heart bled for her, and she so young, tender-hearted, and innocent. Was she to blame because Mr. Wickford was pleased with her and chose to give her his own?"

Poor Mrs. Granger broke down under this speech. She sank hastily into a chair, covered her face with her handkerchief, and burst into a wild wail of despair and remorse.

"Oh, Relie, Relie! my poor darling! How could you think we were so cruel? We were coming to you in a little while, the very moment we had recovered from the shock of the disappointment. Oh, my little Relie, you can't be dead! You mustn't be dead."

Mrs. Hinde had been wrought up to such a pitch of indignation, her heart was so full of tender pity for that lonely, motherless girl who had been driven to commit so rash and desperate a deed, that she had no mercy for the Grangers.

"If you had spoken one half as much yesterday afternoon there would have been no trouble now," said she, coldly. "They say it was heart-rending to see the look she gave you when you went away and left her there."

"Don't, don't! You will drive me frantic. Oh, my little Relie!" sobbed Mrs. Granger. "If we had only never heard or known about the Wickford property!"

Miss Barbara Leighton here interposed, and, with her scornful eyes fixed on Mrs. Hinde's face, inquired: "Who is this person, Mrs. Granger? She adopts a singular manner towards the mother of the future owner of the Wickford estate, if this be the house-keeper."

Mrs. Hinde bit her lip, and coloured slightly. She had forgotten that she had another master now.

"I did not mean to be disrespectful," she replied, hastily. "But I must have a heart of stone not to feel for that poor child who is gone, especially when she was so gentle and sweet-spoken to me."

"And is she dead? Is there no doubt of her death?" demanded Miss Leighton.

"No doubt at all. Mr. Richardson has sent a party of men to look along the river. She went over, for there was her hat. Besides, the letter shows it was intended."

Mrs. Granger sat with locked hands and horrified, despairing face, but she roused herself at this remark.

"The letter! I must see it, and I must be there when she is brought back. Oh, Relie, Relie! you shall come to your old chamber, though only in your coffin."

And while she spoke her weak, trembling hands folded her shawl around her, and essayed to tie the strings of her bonnet.

Miss Leighton helped her, and said, in the same tone she would have used to a child:

"You are agitated now, Mrs. Granger, and cannot see plainly the true state of the case. It is very melancholy and unfortunate certainly, but you have

nothing to blame yourself for. Don't add to your unhappiness by such a thought."

"You won't go then?" faltered Mrs. Granger.

"No, it would be highly indecorous and unbecoming. I will await your return here, and of course postpone the ride to town until Arnold is at liberty to accompany me."

Mrs. Granger made no reply, but tremblingly accepted the arm Mrs. Hinde offered, and the two women hurried back to the great house on the Wickford estate.

Arnold, with a face as hard and almost as white as marble, met them in the vestibule.

"Have they found her?" gasped his mother catching at his arm.

She hardly recognized the voice that answered: "Not yet. But her shawl and handkerchief have been discovered, in the river, three miles below the spot where the hat was found. There is no question about her death; the letter makes the hope vain and useless."

"Oh, what does she say? Let me see it!" gasped Mrs. Granger.

Arnold put his hand into his vest, and drew it forth.

Mrs. Granger's blinded eyes saw not a character, but Mrs. Hinde whispered the words as she read them:

"ARNOLD, dear Arnold, may you be happy. I give you back what I never meant to take away, the inheritance you have looked upon as your rightful due. Aurelia Ireton shall not stand in your way. Heaven bless you, and forgive me if I am wrong. Ask your mother to think of me more charitably, now that I give this proof of my innocence of any designs upon the Wickford property."

"Your poor RELIE."

Every word was like a dagger to each listener. Even Mrs. Hinde forgot her resentment, as she looked from one pale face to the other.

"Oh, Relie, Relie!" sobbed Mrs. Granger. "I would give all the world to recall yesterday."

Her son, with a bitter, echoing sigh, turned back into the house, exchanged a few hasty words with Mr. Richardson, and locked himself in the library.

All the terrible array of accusing, tormenting thoughts which kept him company could be dimly guessed by his haggard face and hollow eyes when, at length, after repeated summonses from his mother, he came forth again among them.

Mrs. Granger glanced into his face, and was half afraid to speak, but at length she ventured to whisper:

"The day is almost gone, Arnold, and Miss Leighton is going to town if you come back to the house."

Arnold Granger almost ground his teeth together as he repeated the name.

"Miss Leighton! Miss Leighton! why does she wait? Let my father drive her into town as swiftly as she likes. I shall stay here till they bring her back, my poor Relie! I have no time nor thought for anything else."

Mrs. Granger wiped away a fresh gush of tears as she suggested, meekly:

"But, Arnold, Miss Leighton will think it very strange. She might be angry not to see you at all before leaving."

"Tell her my place is here, that I shall not leave until Relie is found," answered Arnold, sternly, and, retreating again, locked the door behind him.

Mrs. Granger returned home, making the best report possible, and was inexpressibly relieved when her elegant visitor had taken leave—not without many sweetly spoken and gracefully worded condolences—and been taken to the nearest railway station in preference to attempting the long drive to town.

Mr. Granger returned with a grave, worn face, and, coming into the house, said, with a heavy sigh:

"Well, mother, Miss Leighton's visit is over. It is little we dreamed what would be the result."

"Little enough. Oh, Andrew, I never knew trouble before. When I think of all Relie's pretty ways, and loving looks, and then remember this cruel termination, it seems to me my heart will break. I can't help believing, besides, that there was more between Arnold and Relie than we thought. That look in his face haunts me."

"I am of your opinion. It is plain that this fine lady has no power to comfort the lad, or he would never have allowed her to go without saying good-bye. I am sorry for Arnold's engagement to Miss Leighton. But I must go now to learn if anything more has been found. I shut my eyes close when I came by the river. I could not bear to look at it."

But a fortnight of wretched anxiety and suspense passed, and the river still held its victim. At the expiration of that time intelligence was received from a town nearly twelve miles below that a woman's body had been found, and been buried by two yeomen. Exposure to the water had so changed what had once been so fair and lovely an image of girlish

grace that recognition was out of the question, and the Grangers were not allowed the shocking sight. It was buried, however, with solemn service in the Wickford grave, and a costly monument told the sad fate of Aurelia Ireton.

Slowly the romantic, pitiful story faded away from the remembrance of the neighbourhood. Even Mrs. Granger began to smile cheerfully and plan hopefully again, especially when she found that her son made no objection to taking possession of the inheritance, as she had vaguely feared.

"What!" said Arnold, with a vague, abstracted look in his eyes, "much as I loathe and detest it, shall I deny this poor comfort to that devoted girl? What she has died to give shall I dare refuse to accept? Though it scorched my very heart I would accept it!"

People were curious to know how Arnold Granger would appear after this trying experience, but their curiosity was destined to be baffled. After taking formal possession of the estate he went away on a foreign tour and was absent nearly five years. He returned with a still greater manliness of carriage, a rich and varied experience. But there was still a gravity in his eye, an occasional compression of the lip, which betrayed to his mother's anxious scrutiny that the memory of Helie Ireton still hung around him. Miss Leighton's imperious eyes examined his face scarcely less eagerly. She had received a brief call before he left the country, and no allusion whatever had been made towards an early marriage, much to her chagrin, as it destroyed her plan for an extended bridal tour. She had not ventured to betray her indignation, for she was keen-witted enough to detect the change wrought in his character by the trying scenes he had passed through. But on his return she met him with a full array of inimitable charms, determined to win him back to his original humble devotion.

She had longed for this interview with eager, triumphant anticipations. But she came out of it angry, resentful and humiliated. He was less than ever her lover—she read that easily, and saw too that the strange spell cast upon him by the little country girl's tragic death still held its power over him. Yet she spoke gaily and pleasantly, and betrayed nothing of her thoughts to him; least of all did she hint at any doubt of their ultimate marriage; and Arnold Granger, with a stifled sigh, hurried away from the brilliant society offering its brightest allurements to him, and went alone, and sorrowfully spent nearly half a night in the country churchyard, around the grassy mound from which gleamed the sculptured stone which told the name of the sleeper below, and gave its eloquent history of the past in the touching words of scripture:

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

CHAPTER V.

"Victor, Victor! I have great news for you. Come at once, sirrah, and hear it."

The speaker, a very pretty young lady in white muslin, with blue ribbons, leaped over the vine-hung veranda, and nodded gaily to a young gentleman indolently stretched upon the lawn, under the shade of a noble elm-tree.

The latter tossed away his cigar, yawned once or twice, and rose languidly, turning towards her a pleasing, prepossessing countenance, lighted by gay blue eyes, and surmounted by a luxuriant growth of curls of a pale brown.

"Something new! By the latest post, undoubtedly. Most serene and amiable Rose, queen of the floral gems, I bow before you in due meekness and reverence, and await your information with intense eagerness."

As he spoke Victor Haldeman swung himself lightly across the railing, ran gaily up the flight of steps, and made his appearance beside his cousin, Rose Ingalls, with a most ridiculous series of bows and flourishes.

"Now, Victor, be reasonable a little while. If you keep me laughing I can't talk, and I have really a great deal to say."

"I am dumb, and will turn myself into a statue," replied Victor, with a conical contortion of his mouth, looking for all the world like a petrified mummy.

"Incorrigible!" ejaculated Rose, laughing more heartily still; "at this rate you will never learn my news."

"What is the matter, Rosie?" asked a sweet young voice; the shutter near them was pushed open, and another young lady appeared at the window with a piece of embroidery in her hands. "Oh, it is Victor, is it?"

"Of course, Annie. Is not Victor the sole object of merriment within our reach? You may always be sure he is at the bottom of all the mischief and all the fun!"

Annie Haldeman, smiling archly, reached out from the window and laid her snowy hand on Victor's shoulder.

"Victor, you naughty boy, come out of that old-man-of-the-mountain attitude. If you could see how you looked!"

Victor shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't I know how I look? Hasn't the mirror told me, and all the pretty girls, have they not whispered their honeyed praises in my wearied ear? I can picture Adonis—Hyperion—"

"And Narcissus!" retorted Rose, merrily.

"I don't think he can pine with love for the image he now presents," added Annie.

"If you detract from my beauty you assail your own, Miss Annie Haldeman, and I'll appeal to a certain friend of mine for decision. Ahem! let me see, what were those lines I pilfered out of Ned Weston's portfolio?"

"Eyes like summer violets brimmed with sparkling dew, And hair whose curls have caught the sunbeams' golden hue."

Now, Rosie, you shall be judge, am I not quite as good looking as the lovely and accomplished Miss Annie Haldeman, the poet's pride?"

As he said this the young man leaned against the open window, and with one arm playfully drew his sister's face against his own.

Rose smiled with tender pride as she looked upon the two fair young faces, as much alike as two could be, the one spiritual and delicate with womanhood's refinement, and the other brave and gallant with manly pride.

"I don't think Annie will appeal from my judgment, Victor. When you behave properly you are very good looking. So now praise my good nature in passing such a sentence, and come and talk over with me my news in a sensible manner."

"Certainly, certainly. I am all attention. Let us hear what it can be. It can't be anything to do with those charming Ayres, because I met Amyas this morning, with his sketch-book, and inquired for his sister, and she was well, and had there been anything new he would have told me."

"I am not so sure of that," answered Rose, somewhat hastily; "they are certainly very fond of mystery, those Ayres. How little we know about them after an acquaintance of twelve months."

"We certainly know as much as we have any right to expect," returned Victor. "Amyas said plainly that they were alone in the world, and had no past to describe to anyone. He has taken pains, moreover, and so has his sister, to impress upon everyone that they are poor, and dependant upon their own exertions for their worldly fortune."

"Besides, we can see for ourselves that they are pure and unblemished, wonderfully gifted, and altogether the most fascinating people we have ever known, without the faintest attempt to gain favour from anyone," echoed Annie, a soft tinge of pink creeping over her cheek by her sudden enthusiasm.

Rose Ingalls glanced from the two pair of eager blue eyes and earnest lips, and secretly sighed, but she spoke only in gay accents.

"Well, to be sure. I had no idea of assailing the Ayres. And here I have left the news still untold. Guess, Victor, who is coming to spend a whole month with us. Somebody who will make us as gay as we can wish, who is queen of festive scenes, and can drive away all dullness and ennui—a very famous belle."

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

MR. RUTHERFORD has been making a very careful examination of the surface of the moon, and he has arrived at the conclusion that the crater, which was supposed to have undergone some change, has not in any way altered its position.

MR. J. G. SYMONS tells us that 2-21 inches of rain fell during twenty-four hours, from 10 P.M., on Thursday, the 25th, to the same hour on Friday, the 26th of July. This is equivalent to a fall of two hundred and twenty tons of water per acre during the day and night—a quantity unequalled in the same space of time for the last ten years.

LEEMING'S LOOMS.—Amongst the few novelties in textile manufactures at the Paris Exhibition are some looms exhibited by Messrs. John Leeming and Sons, of Bradford. One of them consists of a box loom with six shuttles, which is so arranged that they are enabled to throw any shuttle in the series when desired, and to give any number of double picks with any shuttle; the pattern they are now weaving cannot be produced by any other six-box circular loom in the exhibition. Another most ingenious application is made to a Jacquard loom of simple construction, for weaving wide ornamented goods without losing the material between the spots

or ornamented parts, which have hitherto been produced by throwing a weft of the desired colour and material right across the stuff and cutting out those parts which are left between the figures. This is obviated in the loom to which we allude, by the use of a number of miniature shuttles attached to the moving part of the loom, and which have a throw just sufficient to work the spot or pattern to which they correspond—weaving it fast, it is to be observed, not with loose ends as is ordinarily the case. They produce the ground and figure at the same time, by forming too distinct sheds in the warp for the passage of the ground and ornamenting shuttles; we doubt not that this contrivance will be appreciated by the practical manufacturer. Messrs. Leeming also show a circular box loom arranged for attaining a higher speed and consequent production than has yet been attained, and fitted with an improved break. They have also a 20-treadle index machine for dividing the warp to form what is known as V shed. Mr. Leeming has received a gold medal.

HARBOURS OF REFUGE.—The annual reports of the engineers show that at Portland the quantity of rough stone deposited in the breakwater mound, and the foundations of the heads, has reached 5,627,654 tons. With the exception of some temporary damage to masonry in the gales of January and March, the works have stood successfully the storms of the winter, and large numbers of vessels have taken shelter within the harbour. At Dover the expenditure upon the breakwater, or west arm of the harbour, has reached 611,277*l.*, the estimate being 725,000*l.* At Alderney the expenditure at the end of March, the period to which all these reports are made up, had reached 1,140,513*l.*, the estimate being 1,300,000*l.* At Holyhead, at that date, a length of 7,037 feet of the superstructure of the north breakwater had been built to its full height, and a length of 7,124 feet was built above high water; the inner or harbour wall was built to its full height, and a length of 5,930 ft. In the year ending the 31st of March, 3,647 vessels sought the shelter of this harbour. The expenditure had reached 1,371,155*l.*

ANIMAL POISONS SUPPOSED TO BE ALLIED TO CHOLERA POISON.—In some experiments on the poison of the cobra-di-capella, which George B. Halford, M.D., Professor of Anatomy in the University of Melbourne, has been lately engaged in, he has discovered that when a person is mortally bitten by the cobra, molecules of living "germinal" matter are thrown into the blood and speedily grow into cells. These cells multiply so rapidly that in a few hours millions upon millions are produced at the expense of the oxygen absorbed into the blood during respiration; and hence the gradual decrease and ultimate extinction of combustion and chemical change in every other part of the body, followed by coldness, sleepiness, insensibility, slow breathing, and death. The professor adds to his account of the action of this powerful poison that he has many reasons for believing that the *materies morbi* of cholera is a nearly allied animal poison, and that if this, on farther examination, should prove to be the case, we may hope to know something definite of the poisons of hydrophobia, small-pox, scarlet fever, and, indeed, of all zymotic diseases.

THE ATMOSPHERE OF LONDON.—The carbonic acid gas emitted from three million human lungs may be chemically indistinguishable from that disengaged from the fourteen thousand tons of coal consumed per diem in the metropolis; but with the produce of respiration we cannot doubt that there is mingled a miasma quite distinct from the effluvia of the furnace. Thus we find on the leeward side of London, in this summer weather, while the sun is obscured by the canopy of unconsumed carbon, the current of polluted air that creeps through the streets is such as to affect even strong men with a sense of faintness. When a slow but steady draught sweeps the confined air gradually from the metropolis those districts over which it last passes, in this summer heat seem unfitted to allow the chest to expand with a healthy respiration. If this be the case (and we can appeal to daily experience on whatever happens to be the leeward side of the metropolis) now, what will be the case at the close of the present century, by which time we may expect London to contain six million inhabitants? The actual experiment of how large a city can be made seems to be in rapid course of solution. It is not our wont to be alarmists, or even to point to menacing evils without the purpose of suggesting a remedy. The increasing difficulty of living in London in the summer, notwithstanding the immense improvement in the purity of the Thames, becomes every year more oppressive.

A NEW street in Camberwell has taken upon itself the honour of the Sultan's will. It is henceforth to be called Sultan Street.



[THE FACE AT THE WINDOW.]

TRIAL AND TRIUMPH.

CHAPTER I.

"INFORMATION is wanted of Margaret Cavendish. When last heard from she was in the Wilton Woollen-Mills. Any word from her, or any news of her whereabouts, will be welcome to the advertiser, who has something of importance to communicate."

"R. WHITEHALL."

The man who penned these lines sat before a large table covered with a cloth.

There was nothing remarkable in his appearance, save that he seemed like one who had travelled much and was well versed in the ways of the world.

His forehead was a noticeable feature, being both broad and high, but receding. His features indicated a kind and resolute manhood. The room in which he sat was shabby genteel.

The furniture, when new, had been of the finest and costliest materials; the carpet, wherever the colours were visible, proved its previous elegance; the paper on the walls was still handsome, so also were the ornaments of the ceiling and the old-fashioned cornices.

A great fireplace gave the room something like cheerfulness; for, within it, a dozen tongues of bright yellow flame lapped over and around the heavy logs with which it was filled, giving a light and warmth that it seemed to recognize as an old acquaintance but recently come back to gladden and to bless.

Roger Whitehall leaned forward a moment, after he had signed his name, as if to think the matter over.

"That, I believe, is the best thing I can do," he said, musingly, and then carefully read the few lines again. "I have been all over the mills. Some few remember a girl whose name was Margaret; a pale, nervous thing, they say she was. Poor child! bereft of her

mother, her uncle at the same time lying murdered in the house; the next day, as it were, her father bankrupt; it was all very sad, very sad. No wonder she received a shock from which it was impossible for a sensitive nature to recover. But this, perhaps, will find her. Let me see; that was three years ago. She must now be nineteen. Come in," he added, as a knock was heard at the door.

"A young lady, sir," replied the servant, and then withdrew.

Roger Whitehall sprang to his feet, a glow of expectation irradiating his fine countenance. A tall, well-dressed woman entered, who bowed, and obeyed his gesture to be seated.

"You are Mr. Roger Whitehall?" she said, courteously.

"And you are Miss Margaret Cavendish?"

"I regret to undeceive you; but, learning from a friend of mine that you were in pursuit of Margaret, I thought it best to call and give you what intelligence I could."

"What sort of a person is she?" asked Roger Cavendish—"I mean in appearance."

"A little creature, who always seemed bowed down with some trouble. I took a great interest in that poor little girl, and I should like to be the first one to congratulate her upon any good fortune that may befall her. I hear that she has money left her."

"Yes, a fine legacy, seventy thousand pounds; the result of a speculation in which her father was engaged the month before his death."

"Then her father was living so lately!" exclaimed the lady, in some surprise. "I have always understood that he was dead."

"Indeed! Margaret must have known that he was living, for he received letters from her up to the week he died. But they are all dated from Wilton Woollen-Mills."

"And how lately did he die, sir?"

"Within the last five months."

"She has not been at the mills during the last year."

"Are you sure of that?"

"I am certain."

"It is very strange. You say she was sad?"

"Always. It was a rare thing to see her smile. Those who were intimate with her always remarked it when she did. Everybody respected her, and it was plain to see she had been in better circumstances."

"And you have never met her since?"

"Yes, sir; I have met her twice."

"Indeed!"

"And both times within the last month."

"Then you know where she is?"

"No, sir; for I hold no communication with her."

The first time, she got into a crowded omnibus; I was at one end, she at the other. I tried to attract her attention; but she looked so persistently the other way, and put a thick veil down, that I am afraid she did not wish to be recognized. The next time I saw her I was passing in a carriage, but I am sure it was her. She did not see me then, and I should certainly have followed her, but the occasion was a funeral, and I could not. It seems to me as if she were striving to hide herself from everybody."

"But why should she do so?"

"That I cannot tell. It may be, I have sometimes thought that, there was an attachment between her and the young man who was committed for the murder of her uncle."

"Ah! that would make the matter very sad, very sad indeed. The case was manslaughter, I have heard, however."

"Yes; the victim lived four days, though without consciousness. And that saved young Le Marks from the gallows."

"Who was this Le Marks? What position did he hold in the family?"

"He was one of Mr. Cavendish's clerks—a very quiet, handsome young man, I have heard. Some say there was a violent quarrel between him and Margaret's uncle the day before the latter was killed. He found out that Le Marks paid more attention to little Miss Margaret, who was not yet sixteen, than he liked; and, being a very proud, high-tempered man, he said things that created ill-feeling between them."

"But there must have been some more decided evidence than a few hasty words," said Roger Whitehall.

"Oh! indeed there was," returned the lady—"the strongest evidence. The instrument of death was found hidden in a dislodged panel in young Le Mark's room, and some clothes stained with blood. Still, no one could prove anything against him, for his previous character was beyond reproach. Fortunately, the poor fellow had no very near relatives to be disgraced, his immediate family being dead. I am told he conducts himself very well in prison, and still insists that he is innocent. I am very sure that Margaret thinks he is; but her emotion was so terrible, once or twice, that I did not dare to mention it again."

"A dreadful thing," said Roger Whitehall, sadly. "Then you still believe she is in town," he added, a moment after.

"Yes; I am almost certain she is still in town. I once said to her that I thought the country was the best place for her. Her tastes proved it, for I have seen her fairly cry with joy over a bunch of wild-flowers; but she shuddered at the very suggestion, and declared that she would not live in the solitude of a country town for millions. I shall never forget how she looked when, turning to me, she said:

"Miss Mildham, if I could always be at work, night and day, and never think, then I should be happy."

Nothing more was elicited at that interview. But enough had been said to prove that Margaret was still in town; so Mr. Whitehall dispatched his notice to the different newspaper-offices, then sent for his supper, which was brought up by a tidy maid, and waited with patience the result of his application.

CHAPTER II.

IN the room of an old-fashioned house, four years previous to the commencement of my story, sat Margaret Cavendish, in the bloom of youth and beauty. A little creature, with inexpressible grace in every movement and feature, an airy, nameless something about all she did that made one think of fairy-land in her presence, it was no wonder that she, the only child, should be the idol of the household.

Mr. Cavendish had always been a prosperous merchant. His house, chosen for its roominess and comfort, was furnished in the most splendid manner;

and Maggie had never known a want, or even a wish unfulfilled. To-night there seemed an unwanted fire in her eye, a new and brighter beauty in her face, as she flitted about the room, now catching up some old music and humming it, now moving towards the corridor, and scanning it minutely.

"I wonder if this happiness will last," she murmured softly to herself. "Oh! my heart almost aches with its excess. I feel as if I had no right to this full tide of joy, when there must be so many around me, on all sides, suffering from want and misery. And—here he is at last."

A tall, handsome young man entered the room as she ceased speaking.

Few were nobler in appearance than the aspiring clerk of Mr. Simon Cavendish.

To-night, however, there was an unusual gloom on his brow; a restless fever flushed his cheek, and glittered in his eyes.

Margaret saw it, and arose, uncertain how to meet him.

He greeted her with a wild, yearning, but troubled gaze; then, throwing his hand up to his forehead, he exclaimed, in passionate tones:

"Well, Maggie, it is all over. The dream, though a delicious one, is at an end. I have ceased to hope as suddenly as I dared to speak—ceased utterly and for ever."

"Oh, Philip! what can have happened?" cried Margaret, in great terror.

"Hush, dear; don't look so frightened, or I shall regret that I did not leave without telling you, as I decided to do at first. This has happened, my own, for my own you are, whoever may come between us, your uncle has insulted me with words that a younger man should have paid dearly for using, and your father," his lips grew white, "your father declared that he had not reared you to give away to a beggar. Perdition take them both!" he cried, in a fierce undertone. "Oh, Maggie, darling! how I hated them both! Oh, Maggie, how the curse leaped bitterly to my lips!"

"But you did not! Oh, Philip!"

"No; for I loved you well enough to bear everything. Aye, heaven knows how gladly I would welcome death or even banishment for you. My words are no idle boast, perhaps I shall some time or other prove it."

"But, Philip, dear Philip"—he turned round, with eyes sparkling, despite their gloom, for she had never called him "dear Philip" before—"why did you speak so soon? My father thinks me but a child, you know; and I am his only one. I do not think he wants to resign me at all."

"I did not speak, Maggie; I was not thinking of doing so; at least, I would have deferred it for a year. But it was forced upon me by your uncle, with a coarse sneer; and you know, dearest, what he can do in that way."

"Yes, I know that he is very abrupt sometimes, and does not scruple to wound even my feelings, much as I believe he loves me. But my father is always considerate. Oh, do not feel unkindly towards him; remember I am all he has, and, indeed, how could I offend my father? He has been everything to me since the death of my mother; you know I idolize him, Philip."

The mournful earnestness of her voice, her eyes glistening with tears, roused all that was noblest in the breast of Philip Le Marks.

"Dearest, I do not blame you for the reverent love you bear your father," he said, quickly. "To me he has been the most generous of patrons, the kindest of friends. I only wonder, when I think of it, how I could ever have been so mad as to lift one thought towards you; more to aspire to your love. It is too great, too precious a treasure for one who has yet to struggle towards fortune with every chance against success. But that presumptuous hope, sweet as it is, I must for ever relinquish. Maggie dear, I am going away."

"Oh, Philip!" She held out her hand imploringly. The mute anguish of that glance was indeed terrible contrasted with the previous joy and brightness of her countenance.

"I cannot stay in honour after what has passed between the members of your family and myself. Thank heaven," he added, as a wild, revengeful expression flitted for a moment over his face, "thank heaven that I did not strike your uncle. The provocation was bad enough, heaven knows. But it is all over. Don't look so pale, my love; I shall be righted yet. Your father wishes wealth for you. He is right perhaps in looking at it in this way. You could not—you must not be the wife of a poor man. A father's curse and poverty will crush the noblest heart. No, I will not tempt you from your duty. Heaven forbid! But, Maggie, if I go away you will not forget me!" he cried, passionately, his voice full of tears. "Oh, Maggie, till I knew you

how barren seemed my life! Now the very thought of you, though exiled, and it may be suffering, will repay me for long hours of toil. Believe me, dearest—oh, believe me when I say that I would suffer anything—die for you!"

Maggie's eyes were overflowing with tears. A step sounded in the passage and she arose to fly from the room. Philip caught her to his heart for a moment and held her in a tender, passionate clasp. Then releasing her he turned to meet his employer, who entered the room as Margaret left it.

"I thought I heard voices," said the merchant, sternly.

"You did, sir," was the reply.

"Was Miss Margaret here?"

"She was here, Mr. Cavendish."

"And you have been holding an interview with my child, in spite of what I said?"

"I have bidden her farewell for ever, sir. I shall probably never see her again," said the young man, all anger fading out of his voice. "I leave to-morrow."

"To-morrow—you leave to-morrow?" ejaculated the merchant. "Pray where do you mean to go?"

"That, sir, will depend upon circumstances," said the other, almost haughtily.

"And you have doubtless arranged to keep up a clandestine correspondence," said the merchant, a touch of irony in his voice.

"Mr. Cavendish, what do you take me for?" cried Philip Le Marks, drawing his figure up proudly. "Poor as I am I believe I have some pretensions to honour. No, sir, I did not ask your daughter to write to me. Loving her as I do I did not seek to bind her by word or deed to my uncertain future. Mr. Cavendish, I would die for Margaret!" His voice faltered. "But even for her I would not commit an unworthy act."

There was a long silence, broken at last by the merchant, who frankly held forth his hand to the young man.

"Mr. Le Marks," he said, "you compel my respect, nay, more, my admiration. Let all rest as it is at present; go out and prove yourself what I think you are, and if Maggie stands the test of absence you shall have her—my hand on it. You're truly a noble fellow, Philip."

The young man gave his hand almost cordially. He could not quite forget the interview of the afternoon, nor the taunts he had borne from the brother of this man, but his heart was lighter and happier.

That night at twelve o'clock Margaret, who had not retired, hearing strange noises in the hall, opened the door of her room. A lamp burned dimly at the farther end, but she could still see the outlines of a horrible vision—her father flying through the hall, blood on his sleeves, no coat on, with a haggard and dreadful look, depriving his face of the semblance almost of humanity.

With one cry of "Father!" she fell back nearly fainting, but recovered; a few minutes afterwards her door was violently opened and shut, but not before a note was thrown at her feet.

CHAPTER III.

MORE dead than alive Margaret staggered to her feet, took up the paper mechanically, and read the following:

"MARGARET,—As you value your soul's salvation say not a word to anyone of what you have seen to-night. Remember, if you violate your filial duty in this respect, a wretched father's curse will follow you. Surely I need say no more to one whom, whatever may be my faults, I have ever loved and shielded from trouble."

"YOUR MISERABLE FATHER."

Margaret crouched down again, dumb with fear and terror.

What deed of darkness had taken place in those still night-watches? What meant the blood upon her father's shirt-sleeves, the horrible anguish and self-loathing that distorted his countenance? Suddenly a wild, appalling thought beset her soul. Philip—what of him? Where was he? Had he been foully dealt by? She remembered that he had spoken with honest indignation of insulting language which some might think life-blood would hardly wipe out; remembered her nervous agitation, the whitening of his lips. She knew nothing of the overtures her father had made to him; and now, if they had met and harder words had led to sterner provocation, and, in the heat of passion, her father had ended the existence of her best loved! Her heart stood still. The father she loved and idolized—a criminal! Oh, no! it could not be. He had never been caught but perfect in her eyes, a courteous and Christian gentleman; she would not believe it. But if—if he were guilty. If there had been trouble, if his hand were stained, as his sleeves evinced, then she would be silent, even if silence bore her

down to the grave. Infamy should never, through her lips, touch that beloved name—never! never! More than once she was on the point of leaving her chamber, and searching room after room for some frightful sight that she knew must be there; but a horrible dread restrained her. She threw herself on the bed, and more than once found herself struggling from a dream of horror, in which her father and the object of her love were joined in deadly quarrel, and blood was shed.

Nervous and trembling, she prepared to go downstairs, not waiting for the breakfast-bell. She longed, yet dreaded to meet her father. How would he act, conscious of the strange, silent scenes of the night? She strove to persuade herself it was a dream, a nightmare. But no; there was the letter, crumpled as it had been in her desperation. Lighting a lamp, she reduced the little note to ashes, then, with colourless cheeks, prepared to go downstairs.

Opening the door of the breakfast-room, the first sight she saw was her father reading his paper before the blazing fire. He looked up pleasantly. There were no signs of emotion in his face, nothing haggard, nothing disturbed.

"You are up early, my dear," he said, with rather a gay manner. "You are pale too. Ah! I see, I see. Young Le Marks is a fine fellow, little one. And, if he proves himself a man—well, we shall see."

Margaret seated herself in a sort of bewilderment. What did this unwonted kindness mean? Why should his thoughts revert so immediately to Le Marks? A strange stupor oppressed her heart and brain. She found herself, for the first time, standing as an involuntary accuser and judge of her own father; a position the most cruel that one of her sensitive, affectionate nature could be placed in.

"It is very strange that your uncle is not down yet," said Mr. Cavendish, looking up again from his paper. "He is always the first up in the house. I suppose sleeping over such a mountain of gold has made him more than usually somnolent."

"What do you mean, papa?" asked Margaret. "Why he drew ten thousand pounds from the bank yesterday, intending to invest it in some speculation, and laid with it under his pillow, I suppose. That used to be his habit."

"Oh, father."

"Well, child, what makes you look so frightened?"

"If—any thief—but—you know—"

"Nonsense, little one; nobody knew it but me. What is the matter with our household this morning? Neither James nor Le Marks."

At that moment the latter entered the breakfast-room. He was haggard, and looked like a man labouring under the drowsiness caused by opiate. The blood drew to Maggie's cheeks, and she breathed freer—no harm had come to him.

Mr. Cavendish pulled the bell, and sent a servant to his brother's room. The man came back white as a sheet; he staggered, he stuttered—he seemed to have taken leave of his senses.

"What in the world has happened?" cried his master, aghast.

"Oh, sir, it's awful! He's murdered!"

"What?"

And with one bound the merchant sprang from his seat and left the room.

He came back only to confirm the terrible tidings, and sent Le Marks after a physician. The unfortunate man was barely alive, but reason had departed.

For four days they hung about his couch, hoping to gain some information that would lead to the detection of the murderer.

At the end of that time the guilt was fastened upon young Le Marks, certain weapons having been found ingeniously concealed in his room, and blood discovered in various places. It was proved that he had not slept in his bed that night, that he had quarrelled with the old man the day previous; and enough evidence was gathered to criminate him and lead to his imprisonment.

Only Margaret knew the terrible secret. Divided between love and duty, most sad and terrible was the weight she had to bear. No wonder her face aged in the few months of suspense that followed, so that her best friends would scarcely have known her.

Not long after young Le Marks, through her silence, was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. Mr. Cavendish failed. He was a ruined man, for he discharged every obligation to the last farthing he possessed, left his daughter with a distant relative, and embarked for California. And all this time Margaret, as a sheep before her shearers, was dumb; she opened not her mouth. More reverses came; her aunt died, and Margaret was thus thrown upon her own resources, burdened with a great and dreadful secret. No wonder her sweet face bore a perpetual look of sorrow, or that sighs were more

frequent than smiles; for night and day she pined for her dear lost love, and would not—nay, could not be comforted.

CHAPTER IV.

"MARGARET CAVENDISH."

The voice was sharp, the speaker middle-aged and unpleasant in her appearance, for the face was shrewish, the front teeth gone, and the brow and cheeks wrinkled.

Margaret came from her little room a pale, wan semblance of her former self, now the slave and drudge of this repulsive mistress, who worked her "to death," and in return gave her only the bare comforts of an untidy home.

"Put them irons down. Get the board out and put it on the table. Cut up a little wood, make a fire in the back parlour, and sweep it out. But go out first and buy me the paper."

Margaret put on a much worn bonnet, flung down the thick veil she usually wore, went out, and soon returned with the paper. Once more she was busy with her household duties, the multiplicity of which suited her, when the sharp voice called again:

"Margaret! Margaret Cavendish!"

A strange look shot forth from her light gray eyes as the girl appeared. She had been considering.

"On the whole, no matter," said her mistress, briefly.

"I thought I wanted you."

Again Margaret went back.

"I might as well see to this myself," said the woman, musingly.

She put on her bonnet and cloak, and in less than an hour returned.

Again the imperative summons:

"Margaret! Margaret Cavendish!"

The girl appeared, impassive as usual.

"I've got some news for you. Here; read this." She thrust the paper into the girl's hand. On reading it Margaret turned pale; she trembled from head to foot.

"Oh! what can it mean?" she murmured, her white, quivering lips scarcely able to articulate. "At last! at last! must I be punished?"

"A terrible punishment," cried the woman, who had caught her words. "I wish I could be punished that way."

"You will say nothing of this, nothing of me?" cried Margaret, wildly, not heeding, perhaps not hearing, the other. "I must leave you to-day, immediately. I cannot stay another moment," and she was going out of the room.

"Why, girl, what do you know about it?" interrupted her mistress, in the old sharp tone. "Stay! it's a fortune left you; I've been to see about it myself."

"A fortune left me?"

"Yes, child; by your father, who found gold in California, to be sure, and when he died left it all to you!"

"When he died?" repeated the girl, woefully.

"Yes!"

"Then he is dead. Oh, I wonder if he—I wonder—"

She had clasped her hands, and now held them forward, tightly locked, despair in her face.

"Why, how the child takes it! I do declare, I should think you saw a ghost."

"I do see the ghost of a great sorrow," murmured Margaret.

"Well, if ever I saw such a thing," muttered the woman, leaving the room to usher in Mr. Roger Whitehall, with whom she left Margaret—her station being on the outside of the door, with an ear to the keyhole.

Margaret, the heiress, blanched and trembling, her sleeves rolled half way up to the elbow, her dress protected by a large coarse apron, somewhat the worse for wear, her hands, though small and elegantly formed, grown red and rough with constant toilsome work, was not the most prepossessing object that Mr. Whitehall had ever seen.

Indeed, it is no wonder that he thought her quite commonplace, not knowing the wretchedness of heart that had made her what she was. The interview was not a long one.

"You were with my father when he died?" she asked, anxiously.

"Yes. I was with him, had been his companion for months; and a more upright or gentlemanly man I never saw."

A spasm of anguish crossed the young face.

"Then he said nothing of me—nothing—"

Her fluttering voice and trembling lips made her seem very sad. Mr. Roger Whitehall felt his heart drawn towards her.

"Oh, yes, he talked incessantly of little Maggie; and I think it was almost his greatest comfort that he left you provided for."

"Oh, I don't know," murmured Margaret, irreso-

lutely moving her hands nervously one over the other.

"I—to be sure he must have thought so—have felt so, I mean. But it is strange. No message did you say? No message did you say? No message what-ever?" and her gray eyes regarded his wistfully.

"Except that he loved you dearly, and, if permitted, would watch over and guide you."

Margaret shuddered.

"Shall we talk of your plans for the future?" asked Mr. Roger Whitehall, gently.

"Please, I—I have none," she answered, with a weary sigh.

"I have a sister who will gladly receive and make you comfortable till such time as you shall decide what is to be done."

Margaret assented, and the interview was ended. The girl hurried to her little room, threw herself on her knees by the bedside, and, burying her face in her hands, sobbed and moaned:

"Oh, Philip! Philip! while I could work like the veriest outcast I could bear it; but this—this will kill me. I cannot live in splendour, and you in that dreary prison. I cannot—I will not."

CHAPTER V.

MARGARET at last consented to the views and plans of her new and ambitious friends. A small but elegant mansion was found, and furnished regardless of expense.

Mr. Roger's sister, a maiden lady of forty, was installed as chief housekeeper, adviser, and companion; and a more judicious selection could not have been made, for Miss Susan was agreeable in face and manners, a sworn foe to dulness, and with a keen wit, seasoned by good native sense, she managed to show life on its sunniest side.

Margaret was beginning to yield somewhat to this influence, but her sorrow was too deep-seated, partook too much of the character of remorse, for her to be always calm.

There were moments when Miss Susan found her in almost convulsive grief.

One of these occasions, the most severe, occurred one night when the servants had retired, and Margaret had brought her writing-desk into the large sitting-room, which she preferred to the solitude of her chamber.

The delicate outlines of her figure, made more attractive by the rich and flowing material of her dress, and the softness of her complexion, gave back her girlish beauty in all but its bloom; it seemed as if that was gone for ever. Miss Susan sat knitting, her smiling face and plump figure suggesting all manner of comfortable pictures.

"You won't mind staying alone a few minutes, will you?" said the latter, glancing up at Margaret.

"I forgot something. It will not take me long."

"No, indeed; I am not quite such a coward as that," said Margaret, the faintest smile playing over her face.

It might have been twenty minutes before Miss Susan returned. When she did so what was her horror to find Margaret stretched senseless by the window, which was open! In her fright she almost lost her self-possession, but at last she succeeded in restoring consciousness.

"Oh, where am I? My father! my father!" cried Margaret, horror in every feature.

"Child, what do you mean? What has frightened you so?"

"Oh, my father, he haunts me! he came here to-night," cried Margaret, wildly.

"No, child, no; the dead never come back."

"Yes, he came. I saw it once before—that face pressed to the window-pane; but never so close."

"It was imagination, darling; be calm. It was your excited fancy."

"No, I saw him. And, oh, Miss Susan, let me tell you what no other living soul knows, and then you will pity me. You will—and if he should curse me—can the dead curse? Perhaps he would make restitution. Oh, I am so miserable."

"Tell me anything you will, child, if it will comfort you," said Miss Susan, frightened at her incoherent words, yet pitying her evident distress.

"Yes, I will. You knew of my uncle's sad fate?"

"I knew all about it."

"And poor Philip—Philip Le Marks?"

"Yes, dear; the unfortunate—"

"Don't say it! I shuddered Margaret. "He is not guilty!"

For a moment Miss Susan recoiled. Could there be a confession so horrible as at that moment she dreaded from this to her hitherto innocent girl?

"No; Philip never did a deed so terrible! It was—it was my father!"

"Merciful heaven, child!"

"It was, Miss Susan! I saw—I know!"

"And you have let a guiltless man suffer?"

"I have, Miss Susan. Heaven forgive me! I

idolized my father. I could not accuse him—I could not!"

Her voice choked, and again she seemed losing consciousness.

"What is this?" and Miss Susan picked up a note unsealed lying near the window. "Ghosts don't write letters!" she added, significantly.

"Let me have it."

And Margaret almost tore it from her hand, opened it and read:

"A suffering man prays for your compassion. Give me food and shelter for a few hours. I am dying. I will tell her all—I am the murderer of—"

Here the hand had failed; the man had probably collected all his energies to throw it inside the window, which in her fright Margaret had opened.

"But it was my father!" gasped Margaret.

"Then, dear, there is a mistake somewhere. Perhaps he did not die. Hark! that was a groan! What shall we do?"

"Call John up!" cried Margaret—"let him be brought in! I am half wild with this new trouble."

An hour later and both women sat by the bed of the dying man. Margaret knew now that this was not her father, but his twin-brother, who in his early manhood had disgraced him, and, as he thought, fled the country for ever.

"I saw you took me for your father that night," he said, in his confession, "and availed myself of the mistake to escape unknown. The money that was thought to be hidden by Philip Le Marks I stole. It was that I killed my brother for. Send for a magistrate, and let me clear that young man who has suffered for my sin."

It was done, and Margaret's long agony was at last over.

But how recompense him who for nearly four miserable years had suffered blamelessly? How take from his soul the sting of unmerited disgrace?

Margaret, still pale and troubled, but strong-hearted, and once more conscious of her father's innocence, wished herself to be the bearer of the good news.

Armed with fortitude in the shape of the cheerful little woman who accompanied her on one side, and Mr. Roger Whitehall on the other, she passed the gloomy portals of the prison without a shudder, and soon found herself in front of a large grated window. The jailer met her, and explained that in consequence of the established innocence of the prisoner, which was not, however, yet known to him, they should see him in the jailer's own apartment; and consequently they were ushered into a large, handsome room, and there awaited the coming of the prisoner.

The minutes seemed hours to Margaret, in spite of the cheerful conversation of Miss Susan, and the prattle of the jailer's pretty child, who seemed very anxious to inform Margaret that certain flowers standing on the window sill were his, and that every particular chair and ornament in the room was his also and exclusively. She turned pale at every sound.

"This will never do, my dear," said Miss Susan, noticing the fluctuating feelings that made themselves visible on her face; "we shall have you in a fainting-fit, I am afraid."

"No, I will not faint," said Margaret, resolutely, and, turning, looked straight into the eyes of Philip Le Marks, who had come in unobserved.

"Oh, Philip!" she gasped, and then stood up, struggling with her wild emotion.

"Miss Cavendish," he said, gently and softly.

He stood there so still, his face the same, only a little paler, a graver beauty on the brow, in the deep, soulful eye.

"Oh, Philip! I have come—I would be the first to tell you that you are free. Oh, Philip, what a dreadful trial it must have been!"

His countenance did not change, only a sweeter smile. He was as calm as before.

"It does not take me much by surprise," he said.

"I have been expecting it. I have put my trust in heaven. But let me lead you to a seat, Margaret," he added, with more tenderness than ever in his voice, for he saw how much she needed consolation. "You do not say what this trial has been to you."

"Frightful!" she exclaimed, as she sat down apart from the rest, "most frightful, for it seemed to me partly my sin. But it is over now; oh, the blessedness of that feeling! all over."

And the story was told him there, while he listened silently, thoughtfully. Never again was it alluded to, till, one day, months after, when Margaret had rewarded him with her hand, and was now the "beautiful Mrs. Le Marks."

They were talking about the long suffering of true love.

In some casual manner the one great trial of their life was referred to.

"It was well, dearest," said Philip, "that we both

kept silence, or one as innocent as myself might have suffered."

"Both?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, for I too believed your father to be the guilty man. I could not sleep that night, and determined to go out into the air. On the threshold of my chamber I saw, as I supposed, your father enter your uncle's room, and on the stairs I picked up a handkerchief and letter, signed with his initials. That evidence would have been important."

"And you suppressed it?"

"For your sake, my darling."

"And suffered all that long miserable time?"

He bent over, and pressed a kiss upon her forehead.

"Do you remember," murmured he, softly, "what I told you of the test of love—that I would die for you, if need be?" M. A. D.

THE WEB OF FATE.

CHAPTER I.

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Framed thy fearful symmetry?

OVER the tender spring foliage of the park and through the twigs and branches, could be seen the dome and walls of Clarendon House, snowy-white, balconied, pillared, and many-windowed. Carriages stood before the grand portico, and at each of the two wing entrances gentlemen lolled, smoking, reading, gossiping or staring, in the long windows of the smoking and reading rooms, and glimpses of ladies might be seen by passers-by in the park and street, in the parlours and chambers.

All the windows were open to the bright March noon, and curtains fluttered in and out on the light breeze.

In saying that the windows were all open we must except three in the pleasantest and sunniest corner.

Before those three the curtains were closely drawn, much to the annoyance of a young man who was walking up and down one of the park walks. This impatient promenade, of whom it is not worth while to make any mystery, was Mr. Melton Comes, a rather fashionable, respectable, and wholly commonplace young man.

He walked to and fro, pulling his moustache, looking at his watch, and every now and then pulling his gloves up at the wrists.

"Does the lazy fellow mean to lie in bed all day?" was one of his muttered exclamations. "If he weren't such a grand Turk I'd go up and disturb him, but I suppose if I got in, that machine he calls John would be politely requested to put me out."

Inside the closed curtains a soft twilight pervaded an elegant suite of three rooms, which were now formed into one by the folding doors being thrown back.

These rooms were not furnished in the usual tawdry style of hotel upholstery, but in a manner to indicate that a refined taste had presided over the work. Walls, cornices, and ceilings were all snow-white, only delicately veined and fretted with gilding; but this whiteness was subdued by a sumptuous richness of colour that came through voluminous purple curtains, whose heavy tassels were gold-coloured, and of pure silk. Moreover, the walls were more than half covered with ornaments.

There were pictures in all sorts of frames—some of massive carving, black and lustrous, others delicate as vine-sprays in May; others, again, shining like wrought and beaten gold, some old and quaint—a strip of ebony outside a thread of gilding framing some precious water-colour painted far back in the pure dawn of art.

Indeed, all Mr. Griffith's pictures and drawings were valuable, and none but a simpleton ever looked at the frames after having given one glance to the gem set therein.

Brackets, whose exquisite designs had sprung up in the brain of genius, were set here and there, and held some graceful shape in marble, bronze, ormolu, or porcelain, or perhaps some particular book was so conspicuously placed as to denote its value. The carpet, which was the same throughout the whole apartments, was thick and velvety, its white ground strewn with filmy palm-leaves, overlying each other, and looking like shadows falling on a white pavement from trees and vines in the sunshine. Tables, chairs, sofas, cabinets, each a model of elegance, but not too remarkable, and all of deep, rich hues—the woodwork black, brown, and tawny colour, the draperies purple or vivid crimson. Books were everywhere—in covers of carved wood, the

text in manuscript, and embellished with the most exquisite paintings on every leaf; costly illustrated works, first editions, rare books, whose copies were as scarce as comets; new books, too, some just from the press, presented by complimentary editors or trembling authors, for Mr. Sidney Griffith was a critic, and wielded a caustic though a graceful pen.

Near a lofty window in the back room, which looked northward, stood an easel, with a half-finished crayon head on it—a wistful, lovely face, with an air of melancholy hovering around it, with heavy braids of hair seeming to weigh the head a little aside, and large eyes that would droop—both hair and eyes brown. For Mr. Sidney Griffith was an artist.

Slipping down over the pearl keys of a cabinet piano was a piece of manuscript music, the accompaniment unfinished, left just where the musician's inspiration had flagged, or where he had been interrupted. For Mr. Sidney Griffith was also poet and composer.

What more would you? And yet these were not all of his accomplishments.

He was a good horseman—not good for county Galway leaps and runs, perhaps, but a gallant rider in park or on highway.

He could handle a sword so that it seemed not one but a score flashing like lightning all about his head and breast. He could dance when he would condescend, he could talk when it was worth while—in fact, if Mr. Sidney Griffith were a diamond it was by no means in the rough, but brilliant and perfect.

I do not mean to say that he was absolutely great in any one of these accomplishments, but he evinced in each an elegance, a grace, and a finish which genius itself could admire.

Would you see this Admirable Crichton? There he lies, stretched asleep on a sofa of purple velvet that looks almost black, what you can see of it through the flowing folds of his crimson silk dressing-gown. As he lies there anything so hard as the diamond does not seem a fitting type for him.

The impression he makes is one of softness, grace, and delicacy. The form is slight, and beyond the medium height; his face is one of those which can scarcely be termed handsome, but changeable, and capable of a titful and most fascinating beauty. He lay with his arms thrown above his head, and his white and slender hands, blue-veined and pink-nailed, were half buried in the silken yellow-brown locks which clustered carelessly about a low, white forehead.

The pink lips were slightly parted, showing a perfect set of glittering teeth, and his regular breathing stirred a yellow moustache that drooped across his mouth to the smoothly shaven chin. His skin had a soft, creamy tint, otherwise colourless; the delicate brows were flexible, but bent a little down instead of arching, showing more force than was indicated by any other feature; the lids were white, and deeply fringed, and when he opened them you would see light bluish-gray eyes, with speckled irises. Those speckled, changeable eyes are not often seen, and perhaps it is as well.

When the hour-hand of a little French clock on the mantelpiece reached twelve a shrill, musical chirping, as of frightened birds, sounded through the room. You would have thought that twenty nests were being robbed, and that forty bird fathers and mothers were crying out from their little breaking hearts.

The sleeper stirred on his couch, turned his cheek for an instant towards the laced pillow, then dreamily opened his eyes and looked at the clock, waiting till the noise should have ceased.

He always set this unique alarm when he wished to wake at a certain hour, not liking anyone to enter his room when he was asleep.

After a few minutes he arose languidly, gave the inevitable yawn of one who has slept late, unlocked the door, rang the bell, then dropped into a chair, rested his head back on the cushions, clasped his hands over his head, and shut his eyes again.

"Yes, sir," said John, at the door.

"Bring me a cup of tea and the paper," drawled his master, without looking round.

"Yes, sir," said John, again bowing to the back of the chair, above which the back of a white hand and a lock of silken hair were visible.

Then he disappeared.

In two minutes he came back, carrying a waiter, on which were the morning paper and a tiny tea-service of silver and dark blue porcelain.

"Now prepare my bath," said Mr. Griffith, in a voice like a drowsy flute.

A little cup of the amber liquid, which he took strong and without cream, a keen and comprehensive glance over the item of news, business as well as literary, then the gentleman tossed the paper aside, and for the first time glanced at the prompt and quiet John.

"Has Mrs. Griffith been down to breakfast?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. She took her breakfast at eight o'clock."

"Has anyone inquired for me this morning?" was the next question.

"Yes, sir; Mr. Melton Comes has, and he is down in the smoking-room waiting."

A slight frown ruffled Mr. Griffith's smooth brow as he arose.

"I shall see no one for an hour," he said. "If Mr. Comes choose to wait till one he can come up; and, if he does not, give my compliments to Mrs. Griffith, and ask her to be kind enough to step in soon after if she be not engaged. Tell Mr. Comes I threatened your life if you disturbed me before one o'clock."

"I will, sir," replied the servant, gravely, bowing himself out.

"Couldn't the cursed fool find any other time, but he must spoil my breakfast?" muttered the gentleman as he sauntered towards the bath-room.

An hour after there was a gentle knock at the door, and John ushered in the patient visitor. He found Mr. Griffith writing busily, the white hand gliding swiftly over the paper, and tracing quaint and graceful characters.

"Oh, I am throwing myself under the hoofs of Pegasus," said the visitor, pausing.

"Never mind. He is velvet-shod," replied the writer, scribbling away a few minutes without turning; then laying down his pen he rose and greeted his friend with pleasant cordiality.

"I thought that you were asleep when I saw the curtains down," said the young man.

"To be sure they are down. Raise them, John, and open the window. It's March, isn't it? Does the sun shine? I was asleep a few hours this morning after coming in from Mrs. Canderley's party—Mrs. Canderley doesn't shine in entertaining, Comes—but I had to get up, and go to work. I must always work, whether I sleep or not."

And Mr. Griffith heaved a long and pitiful sigh.

"But your work pays," said the other, who seemed to feel some slight embarrassment. "Now, if I could coin gold as easily as you can I wouldn't mind such work. Besides, the ladies all pet and adore you."

"I am happy to learn that I am a ladies' pet," said Mr. Griffith, in a measured tone, giving his moustache a slight twist.

"Oh, I did not mean exactly that, but you know they are always ready to lionize you. Of course I know, Griffith, that you take a higher stand than that."

The young man spoke hastily, and in a deprecating tone, for there was something in Mr. Griffith's cool and gentle displeasure which was not pleasant to meet.

Besides, Mr. Comes was particularly anxious not to offend him unnecessarily this morning.

The gentleman did not help his visitor at all, but merely sat still and listlessly twirled his pen, and the other was obliged to flounder on as best he could.

"The fact is," he stammered, "I do not wish to intrude on your writing. I merely dropped in on an errand. I wouldn't trouble you, but I am hard up just now, and if you could let me have a hundred pounds to-day I should be very glad. You see—"

Not knowing what to present to his hearer's vision the speaker came to a stop.

"My dear boy," exclaimed Mr. Griffith, pathetically, "how am I to get the money? I assure you I do not believe that I have as much as ten pounds in the world. Let me see."

Taking a dark green purse from his pocket, he opened it in the frankest manner, and emptied its contents on to the table.

Mr. Griffith counted them with the utmost naïveté and carelessness.

"Just eleven pounds and seven shillings," he said, looking up with arched eyebrows. "What can I do? I am really sorry, Melton, but you see that I am almost a beggar."

The young man sat flushed and disconcerted. "Perhaps you might be able to borrow it for me," he said, after a minute.

"Rob Peter to pay Paul," sighed the debtor, restoring the coin to the purse. "It would only be shifting the burden from one to another. And I know not a soul I would like to borrow from."

"Mrs. Griffith might oblige you," suggested the visitor, without looking up.

"Borrow money of a lady!" exclaimed his host, flushing with indignant surprise.

"Well, perhaps it wouldn't be pleasant," owned Mr. Comes, somewhat abashed. "Though I borrow from my sisters, aunts, and cousins, right and left, when I am in need."

A shrug of the shoulders was the only reply.

"I wish," persisted the creditor, "that you could think of some way to raise it to-day. I want it very badly."

"I would, if it were possible," Mr. Griffeth said, in his most obliging manner. "I really ought to have paid you before, but you have been so obliging that I have let it slip my memory. I will really see to it, and try to pay you this week. Let me see, how much is it?"

"Two hundred and fifty pounds," said the young man, sulkily.

"So it is. Well, I am obliged to you for waiting so long, and will do the best I can. If this article were once written I could do so immediately, but you perceive it is not beyond the third chapter."

Colouring angrily at the hint, the baffled creditor stretched his hand towards his hat.

"I shall hope to hear from you this week," he said, walking towards the door.

"I will try not to disappoint you," was the gracious reply.

Mr. Sidney Griffeth looked after his visitor, till the door closed behind him, and then still continued looking a moment longer in that direction, as if he saw through the panels. Then he threw down his pen, and began to pace the floor.

"Debt and duns in a circle of torments," he muttered.

A soft knock at the door interrupted him, and at his somewhat sharp summons it opened, and timidly on the threshold stood a lady, the original of the crayon portrait on Mr. Griffeth's easel.

She seemed scarcely to stand, but rather to hover in the doorway, so light was she, so floating her motion, so timid and uncertain her aspect, as she stood there a moment waiting. She was rather small, with a round waist, well developed arms and shoulders, full red lips, and lustrous eyes, all speaking of quick and ardent feelings; and at the same time there was that tinge of melancholy which the portrait so well indicated.

This lady was dressed in deep mourning, which contrasted well with her pearly whiteness, and she wore the merest film of a widow's cap over her lovely brown hair. At sight of her Mr. Griffeth started forward, with a sudden change of countenance.

"My dear Beatrice, I beg your pardon," he exclaimed; "I fancied that it was John who knocked. How could I mistake the touch of this hand for John's rude knuckles?"

He fondly straightened the small hand she had placed in his, and, laying it palm to palm with his own, daintily drew his white finger tips over the dimples at the back.

A fitting smile broke through her tender, pensive face, like sunshine through the mist, and when she spoke her voice vibrated

Like a plunk
That feels an Alpine torrent underneath.

"I would have come sooner, brother," she said, "but Mrs. Washburn would make me read a letter to her before releasing me."

"Tis as well so," he answered, as he led her to a sofa, and took a seat by her side. "To think that I should send for you to scare people away. But I do get so bored, Beatrice. Melton Comes came in while I was writing, and I feared he meant to stay all day. Fortunately he only wanted to borrow some money, and I got rid of him by refusing. But he annoyed me so that I was thoroughly out of temper when you came."

"Then am not I also intruding?" she asked, half rising.

"As though you could ever intrude," he said, placing a detaining hand on her arm. "You inspire, but do not interrupt me. Besides, I wished to say something to you, and this mention of money brings it to my mind." He paused, and a faint blush illumined the soft pallor of his face. "Will you allow me to speak of money affairs to you?" he asked. "One always hates to annoy a lady on such subjects."

His blush was reflected by a deeper one in her face—she seeming embarrassed, while he seemed only perplexed.

"I know that we ladies are not supposed to know much about such affairs," she said, "but I will try to understand, and to do anything you wish. I hope that you do not find me a burden. I have feared—"

She faltered, and tears swam in her bright eyes.

"How could you imagine such a thing?" exclaimed Mr. Griffeth, clasping her hand more closely, and looking with chiding affection in her face. Such a sweet, pathetic face too! "Why, my dear, your little income pays almost entirely your expenses—perhaps entirely. If ever a few pounds came from my side of the purse, when the landlord sends in his bill, I have only been too glad. But if it were so, who should assist you if not your poor husband's only brother? All I am anxious about is this, if anything were to happen to me you would be awkwardly situated. I have been troubled about this for some time."

Before he had finished speaking two tears had

slipped off the lady's long eyelashes, and were rolling over her now colourless cheeks.

"What can you mean by 'anything happening to you,' Sidney," she asked, drawing involuntarily nearer to her the hand that still held hers. "Are you ill? Do you fear any accident? In such a case I would care little for any pecuniary embarrassment."

"Don't be alarmed, dear," said her brother-in-law, soothingly. "I am well, and have no knowledge of any impending ill; but we must always calculate upon such chances. I cannot feel easy, unless your future is more secure. Of course everything I have will be yours; but what have I? nothing but the contents of these rooms. True, these things would sell for something; but I would rather you should not be obliged to sell them. I have been collecting them for years, and should hate to hear of their being broken up and scattered."

"Why will you talk so?" she interrupted, passionately. "One would think that you were about to die."

"I only tell you of these fears of mine in order that you may relieve them," he said, and there was something commanding in the glance that fell on her.

The hand lay passive in his, the eyes were uplifted to his face, only waiting to hear his will in order to do it.

"I think that you ought to try to be reconciled to your uncle."

A shade of crimson colour rose, and seemed to scorch the fair face, her eyes drooped, and she sat silent, and with quivering lips.

"I know that it is unpleasant to think of this," the gentleman went on, in a hasty, persuasive voice; but he is getting old, and you must forgive him much on that account, and take into account also that rash humour which his mother gave him. He has no one nearer than you, and you were his favourite niece. Hard and stubborn as he seems, I believe that he regrets you, and would receive you gladly. I do wish you would try to conciliate him, Beatrice."

She did not look up, but kept turning her wedding-ring round and round as she answered:

"You know, Sidney, my uncle never spoke well of Henry."

"But he will keep silence now Henry is dead. If I thought he would be such a brute as to say anything that would hurt your feelings now I would not advise you to attempt to see him."

The colour came mantling up into her cheek again.

"And you know he doesn't like you," she said, unsteadily.

Mr. Griffeth shrugged his shoulders, and heaved an ironical sigh.

"I forgive him," he said.

"He would insist on my leaving here if he would notice me at all," she continued, still with downcast eyes.

"I daresay," said the gentleman, with a genuine sigh this time. "But I should hope to see you sometimes, in spite of him. I should miss you; but I must not be selfish. My own pleasure must bend to your good."

"My cousins would all be in arms," she urged. "They and he would think that my motives were mercenary."

"Of course your cousins would think so, for they are themselves mercenary, and would lose by such a reconciliation. But we must submit to be misunderstood by mean people, and it is never worth while to try to set them right. They do not wish to be right, and are not capable of comprehending any but low motives. I always treat the clamours of such persons with disregard."

"But they would be right; the motive would be mercenary," said Beatrice Griffeth, looking suddenly up with clear, pure eyes.

Her companion was disconcerted for an instant.

"I know that I urged one motive of interest, dear. But I also mentioned others. You would cheer an old man's declining years. You would be like an affectionate child to him. I need scarcely urge the fact that you would relieve my fears for your future."

Her searching, melancholy eyes dwelt for a moment on his face, which was half turned away. Some cloud seemed to fall heavily across her face, making the colour fade, bowing the head, seeming to labour in the slow, deep sigh that heaved her breast.

"Will you let me think of this a little while?" she asked, gently. "I will try to do as you wish, but I would like to think of it."

"Certainly, dear. I would not wish you to consent to anything against your own will, even though it were for your good. We won't talk of it any more now. Come and see your picture."

He had assumed a light and cheerful air, but she followed him with calm gravity to the easel.

"I have exactly caught your look," he said—"that wistful, pensive look which is your speciality. It was a happy chance. But I have a fancy for you in another character. I dreamed of it this morning. I must paint you full length as a sleeping Madonna. You shall wear a blue robe, with white at the neck; and there shall be watching angels overhead, and little rosy faces leaning over your pillow, and peeping through your long hair, tangled there like butterflies, their wings and hair as bright. You have a Madonna face, Beatrice."

"A Madonna face is a face made for sorrow," she said, in a low voice; but the next instant a smile broke forth.

Her smiles came so gently. She remembered that he had dreamed of her that morning, and that thought helped to balance the $\alpha\beta$ of her possible banishment.

"Beatrice, my dear, are we going to drive out?" said a voice at the door, at the sound of which Mr. Griffeth made a profound bow, and Mrs. Griffeth blushed deeply.

"Oh, Mrs. Washburn, I forgot," she said.

The lady, who stepped coolly into the room, and had begun arranging her cashmere shawl before the long mirror, was worthy to make the third in that beautiful group.

Profane persons might call her a handsome old lady, but there was no sign of age about her, except in her hair, which was silver white, and glistened like hoar frost in every ripple that lay across her queenly forehead.

Her complexion was as delicately fresh, the black eyes as bright, the stately form as easily erect as they could ever have been, and the voice had a mellow richness that showed no token of decay.

If art had assisted to preserve the lady's excellent beauty it was not evident; and you would say that, whatever her age might be, it was the age of perfection.

With a *nonchalant* nod and smile, she stood there, drawing the rich folds of her shawl over her arm in such a manner that a portion of its pale green groundwork should lie against the deep black of her dress.

"Run and get ready, dear, and I will wait here," she said, "and keep that blush on your cheeks."

Mrs. Washburn, we may as well say at once, was an old friend of the Griffeths, and now occupied with Beatrice a suite of rooms in the opposite wing of Clarendon House. Like her young friend she was a widow, and acted, in some sort, as duenna to Beatrice.

"Can I set you down anywhere?" she asked, having arranged her toilet to her satisfaction.

"I must write this morning," he sighed.

"This morning! You lazy fellow," exclaimed the lady. "It is two o'clock! I wonder, now, if you've had any breakfast yet?"

"Not a mouthful!"

"No wonder you are the colour of note-paper! May I ask what you are writing?"

The gentleman turned, and glanced over the papers on the table.

"Here is a notice of Thayer's new book. I began savagely, but, having had such visitors, shall perhaps find something to praise before I get through. Here is a notice of the grand concert. What can I do? Miss Lulin sang execrably, but what a face she has! Can I criticize her harshly, when I remember the roll of anubra hair that fell over her white neck? Somewhere among all these papers is a half-finished article. Will you read it some time to-day, and tell me whether I shall finish it?"

"Finish it first, and I will read it after," the lady said. "Here you are, Beatrice."

Mr. Griffeth gave the elder lady his arm to the carriage, but he managed to whisper a word to his sister-in-law when helping her in:

"Don't say anything to her respecting what we were talking about."

She nodded, and drew down her veil, for a group of pedestrians were watching for a glimpse of her lovely face. The coachman pompously took up the reins, considering himself to be the centre of attraction. Mrs. Washburn smiled graciously, and the horses pranced down the street, dividing the attention of the people with the two ladies they drew.

CHAPTER II.

I once knew a Normandy maid,
Whose sire was a testy old elf,
And who always was sadly afraid
Lest the malkin should choose for herself.

BEATRICE LANGDON had been a penniless orphan, whom a rich bachelor uncle had petted, educated, and supplied with pocket-money.

Mr. Langdon had never said it, but he had intended to make this girl his heiress, and even while she was

at school he was puzzling his foolish old brains, and looking through his shining spectacles, to find a husband worthy of so much beauty with such a fortune.

Mr. James Langdon had sundry fixed notions regarding young ladies, one of which was that they were utterly incapable of choosing their own husbands, and invariably bestowed their first affections on knaves, fools, and fortune-hunters. His little Beatrice must be preserved from any such entanglements. Consequently when she left Madame Bonnie's finishing-school, and went to live with her uncle in his comfortable old-fashioned house there was a lover all ready for her—an exceedingly nice young man, whom Mr. James Langdon protested he would marry in a minute, and be glad of the chance, if he were a young lady.

"Mr. Summerton is rich, of good family, five years older than you, is moral, good tempered, good-looking, has no long line of relations hanging about him, like a shoal of fishes, and he will make exactly the husband for you," said Mr. Langdon to his niece, then stopped, because he had lost breath, being a stout gentleman, and not by any means because he had exhausted the list of Mr. Summerton's perfections, or because he was pleased with the expression of the young lady's face.

Beatrice reddened, opened her brown eyes wide with disdainful surprise, and gave her pretty head a toss back.

"I don't know anything about Mr. Summerton, Uncle James, and I don't care anything about him."

The gentleman gave his chair an impatient movement and leaned forward to stir the fire spitefully.

"There it comes. The perversity of girls, their airs, their nonsense. It isn't necessary that you should know anything about Mr. Summerton. I know all about him, and will warrant him. As to caring, you can care for him if you have a wish to do so, and you can't help it when you know him."

The canaries in their cages opened their eyes, and set their little glossy heads on one side, at sound of the laughter that broke forth like a fountain into the air.

Doubtless they thought that some strange bird had come to keep them company, and to put their noses out of joint with his superior singing.

The strange bird had a rosy bill, and dancing, brown eyes, which were laughed full of tears, and her plumage was a pink linen dress, and violets in her hair.

Although Mr. Langdon would have a fire in the grate, the open windows were full of May sunshine, and summer was approaching the earth, if not quite arrived.

"Oh, these old bachelor uncles," cried Miss Beatrice, saucily, and forthwith began to sing the song the opening of which heads this chapter, placing a wicked emphasis on the "teaty old elf," and glancing askance on the angry but bewitched guardian.

His brow wore a portentous scowl, but his mouth worked about with a smile, which he could not wholly suppress. For, to tell the truth, Mr. Langdon was very sensible to feminine charms, and, though a proud and dignified gentleman, could have been made to stand on his head had Miss Beatrice thought fit to coax him to do so.

"You're an impudent minx!" he exclaimed, giving her arm a pinch, but being very careful not to hurt her.

"Oh, uncle! to think that you are already anxious to get rid of me, when I have only been home a week!" said the girl, reproachfully.

"But I don't want to get rid of you," he said, eagerly, distressed at sight of the handkerchief which Beatrice had pulled from her pocket, and seemed on the point of raising to her eyes. "I mean you and your husband to live here with me. You can have the large south chamber, and I will have it fitted up and newly furnished. You needn't be married till next autumn or for a year if you like, and I will set Summerton up in business. He'd better be by himself. You can have the little chamber over the hall door for a dressing-room, and I will have a door cut—"

"Oh, gracious!" panted Beatrice, in dismay, astounded at the finished state of her uncle's plans.

"I'll have a bow-window put into the dining-room—it's rather dark—and I'll run out a small wing on the eastern side."

"I declare, uncle, you're too bad," cried the girl, crimson and indignant, moving away from him, and standing like an insulted princess before him. "I won't look at Mr. Nat Summerton, be sure of that! I never will marry him—never! If he asks me to I will tell him that he is impudent, and forbid him ever speaking to me again. I won't talk to him, notice him, nor sit in the room with him again when he comes here. I won't have him! I hate him!"

Of course the explosion of the young lady's wrath

ended in a torrent of tears and sobs, that seemed as though they would break her heart.

What was a fond, frightened, and immeasurably astonished old uncle to do but coax and promise, and coax again, and promise again, and wonder what could be the matter, and beg his darling not to cry, and protest that she should do everything she pleased, and have undone everything she did not please to do, and finally wipe his own eyes in helpless despair?

"To be packed up and sold—not even to the highest bidder, but to the first bidder!" sobbed Beatrice. "To be promised to a simperton whom I hate, and never consulted about my own affairs! I won't look at him! I will go away and—keep school—or something!"

Finally, after much ado, a compromise was effected. Nothing was to be said to Beatrice about marriage for one year, and Mr. Summerton was to consider himself irrevocably rejected.

No one was to receive any encouragement except from herself, and no gentleman was to be invited with matrimonial intentions. In return the young lady would allow Mr. Summerton to come to the house, and would consent to recognize him as an acquaintance as long as he kept at a proper distance.

Peace was declared, and under the articles of this agreement a year sped happily. Miss Langdon went a great deal into society, and made that noble old-fashioned home of hers ring with gaiety. At first it was gaiety merely, but Beatrice was above being satisfied with that, and she gradually weeded her acquaintances and elevated her pleasures.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

THE ladies say the new cocoa-nut waterfalls are just the thing to wear with a gourd-dress.

WHY is love like the letter R? Because it makes many a Mary marry.

BEAT THAT.—We know a man so clever with his lathe that he can even turn a deaf ear.

A FORTUNE IN A WIFE.—There is said to be a lady in London the tones of whose voice are so silvery that her words pass for shillings.

THE EXIGENCIES OF JOURNALISM.

The following story is told of an Irish newspaper editor, who was pressed for copy:

The foreman called down to him from the printing-office: "We want six lines to fill a column."

"Kill a child at Waterford," was the reply.

"We have killed the child and want two lines."

"Contradict it."

POWERFUL LANGUAGE.—A story writer says: "Floralbel clasped her wide white brow with her two hands as if to still the thunder of thought booming through her brain!" Her head must have ached with such noise in it! Floralbel must be the young lady whose "eyes emit lightning flashes."

WATER ON THE BRAIN.

Invalid: "Now, doctor, I understand my case perfectly! I do not require medicine, but change of air! Husband pleads economy, and says we must remain at home this summer. So all you have to do is to order me to some watering-place!"

Doctor: "Hum! Ah, yes! We will see! I dare say you are right!"

A SWEEPING SMILE.—A fellow who had never enjoyed the pleasure of being coaxed out of his money by a pair of bright eyes swimming in tears, and consequently feels angry with those who have, crustily remarks: "As people sprinkle the floors before they sweep them, so wives sprinkle their husbands with tears in order to sweep cash out of their pockets."

A HATTER in Berlin has posted up in his shop the following question and answer:

Q. Who is over head and ears in debt?

A. He who has not paid for his hat.

WIDE AWAKE.—It was in Dublin city that a good-humoured maid-of-all-work, Molly, once related to her young mistress a most marvellous dream she had the night before. "Pooh, pooh!" cries the latter at its conclusion. "You must have been asleep, Molly, when you dreamed such nonsense." "Indeed I was not then!" replies the indignant Molly. "I was just as wide awake as I am this minute!"

VIRTUOUS INDIGNATION.—The following is a literal copy of a letter received by a leading house in Montreal from a trader in Western Canada, on their refusing to give him a discharge. Inasmuch as the house in question had but one transaction with the individual, had never beheld the "colour of his money," and this was the second or third failure, they felt disinclined to encourage him in

his mode of making money; whereupon he waxes wroth, and thus disburdens himself:—"Dear Sir, it is with feelings of Deep Regret that I have this morning Received Entelligence that you refuse to Syne me off. what in the name of Goodness Do you mean—what have I Don that you Shold Aet in this Way towards me in the Name of Common Sence will it do you any Good to keep me out of Business to next Sept 1865. Will it put one Cent in your Pocket? Why should you act in this way? What did I ever due to you that you should behave in such a Cruel Manner Towards me & Little family trying To Get a Living if you want a Loaf of Bread for the Grecious Sake Let me know if I have only one I will cut it in Tow & Devede with you Nothing ever so Dishonourable Ever Reached Me, As your refusing to Syne, I again in the name of common cence Asks you your reason. Am I a Villin. Am I a Scoundrel. Am I a Robber or what do you Meain I Am for the Sake of Honest Humanity Let me Now what you think of me be what it may & I Demand an answer at once & With Kind regards to the Whole House, I Remen Yours Very truly, D.C."

WHEN Andy Johnson was elected Vice President the political saints and parsons supported him zealously. As soon as he got rid of the vice they deemed him an arrant knave. How strange!

HOW ABOUT IT?

If some unseen individual could pass around from house to house about ten o'clock on a Sunday morning, he would be likely to hear a list of excuses for not attending church something like the following:

Oversept myself. Could not dress in time. Too cold. Too hot. Too windy. Too dusty. Too wet. Too damp. Too sunny. Too cloudy. Don't feel disposed. No other time to myself. Look over my drawers. Put my papers to rights. Letters to write to my friends. Mean to take a walk. Going to take a ride. Tied to business six days in the week. No fresh air but on Sundays. Can't breathe in church, always so full. Feel a little feverish. Feel a little chilly. Feel very lazy. Expect company to dinner. New bonnet not come home.

"No man," said a wealthy but weak-headed bar-rister, "should be admitted to the Bar who hadn't an independent property." "May I ask," said Curran, "how many acres make a wise-acre?"

It is said that when Lord Lyttelton handed in his amendment, disenfranchising all who cannot write a legible hand, the clerk was obliged to beg the favour of his lordship's assistance in deciphering the specimen of calligraphy before him.

A MAN was charged before the Ormskirk magistrates the other day with stealing a horse-cloth from a cart the driver of which had given him a ride, but his identity was doubtful, until, turning to the carter, he injudiciously asked, "Whereabouts did I get upon the cart?" He was committed for trial.

A SCHOOLMISTRESS, while talking down the names and ages of her pupils, and the names of their parents, at the beginning of the term, asked one little fellow, "What's your father's name?" "Oh, you needn't take down his name; he's too old to go to school to a woman," was the reply.

ARTIFICIAL.—An old gentleman recently attempted to remove a large bug from the bonnet of a lady who sat in front of him at the theatre. The result was he unretted all her back hair. Deeply chagrined, he hastily apologized, but soon learned that the bug was artificial, and was used to hold the head and hair together. A scene was the consequence.

REMARKABLY few donkeys are found in the northern parts of Germany. A German lady, newly arrived in England, when sitting in a room overlooking a meadow in the suburbs of London, where some donkeys were grazing, on hearing one of them braying, exclaimed: "Why don't they oil that pump-handle a little? It is quite shocking to hear that horrible noise every time anybody comes to fetch water."

WE are told that the walls of the towns in which an Isle of White newspaper circulates were posted with placards announcing that the next issue of that paper would contain "a full report of the grand naval review as seen from Bembridge Downs." The paper was duly published with the terms of the placard in large letters at the head of a column, and these were followed by two columns entirely blank. We presume a satire—no report for no review.

A LAWYER'S DEFENCE.—Among the traditions of Westminster Hall is one of a certain Sergeant Dary, who flourished some centuries back, in a darker age than the present. He was accused by his brother of the coil of having degraded their order by taking from a client a fee in copper. On being solemnly arraigned for his offence in the Common Hall, it appears, from the unwritten reports of the Court of Common Pleas, that he defended himself by the following plea of confession and avoidance: "I fully

admit that I took a fee from him in copper: and not only one, but several! and not only fees in copper, but fees in silver; but I pledge my honour as a sergeant that I never took a single fee from him in silver until I had got all his gold, and that I never took a fee from him in copper until I got all his silver; and you don't call that a degradation of our order?"

LATEST FASHION.

First Belle: "I thought, last Sunday, when I went to church I would have the smallest bonnet, but that hateful Miss Jones had one just as small!"

Second Do: "Well, she can't very well diminish on this, for there are but two buds and a leaf, with the strings!"

POSITIVE.

"You promised to send me your photograph, John," pouted Maria, "and you have not done so. You have not even written me one word."

"Dearest Maria, then I have sent the picture," replied the smiling John. "Read the advertisements. 'Silence is a Negative.'"—*Punch.*

POSITIVELY THE LAST OF THE LONG SKIRTS THIS SEASON.

Hostess: "Oh, how tiresome! Somebody must be standing on my dress! Would you just run downstairs, and see who it is, Mr. Brown?"—*Punch.*

DRY WORK.—Before parliament breaks up will some member of the House of Commons move for returns of the quantity of beer and other excisable fluids consumed at the (liquor) bar of that House? One would think it must be very great, considering that most of the speeches which Honourable Members have had to make or listen to on the subject of Reform have been thoroughly exhaustive.—*Punch.*

WELL MEANT.

Shoeblack (to daily customer): "Such a treat we've got to-night, sir! Tea and buns, an' speeches at Exeter 'All! Wouldn't you like to go, sir?"

City Magistrate: "Oh, they wouldn't let me in, my boy."

Shoeblack: "Um! (Ponders.) Well—look 'ere. I think I could smug yer in as my father!"—*Punch.*

THE REAL "GAMB CHICKEN."—The one who remained in his shell till it was chipped at the breakfast-table.—*Fun.*

HISTORICAL.

Tom's Cousin: "Who's the Sultan, Tom?"

Tom: "Don't speak so loud, you ignorant gurl: why 'e's the Belgian Prince of Wales!"—*Fun.*

A CIRCULAR NOTE.—An eminent mathematician, who has solved the problem of "squaring the circle," is now engaged in defining the exact circumference of "the round of the papers."—*Fun.*

THE GENTLE CRAFT.

Potter: "That's my fish!"

Totter: "I say 'o'amine!"

Potter: "And I say as he's mine! 'Wot'd ye come interferin' 'ere for? I come 'ere first, and I've spent a box o' gentiles, a bag o' worms, a pound o' graves, a lot o' bran, and a 'arf quarter loaf on 'im. I call it reglar unsportsmanlike; and if you wants that gudgeon, yer'll 'ave to git 'im over my corpse—there!"

—*Fun.*

A BRIGHT-UN.—Blind Tom is announced as giving concerts at Brighton. We are not surprised, for of course in visiting Brighton he goes there to sea. If he could but get on the sea-side of his public no doubt he would be happy.—*Fun.*

A CALCULATION.—A contemporary states that "forty-four Arabs, with their wives, have arrived in Paris, where they intend to give musical entertainments." The programme is not given, but as the wives will of course count as halves (better or worse, as the case may be), by the simplest arithmetical effort we may reckon that forty-four Arabs, with forty-four halves, will probably find themselves equal to "Sixty-six."—*Fun.*

MIMICRY IN NATURE.—At the *soirée* of the President of the Linnean Society the so-called "mimicry in nature" received some remarkable illustrations. Mr. Wallace exhibited a case of large butterflies, the creatures in which when seen alive and flying, with the wings displayed, are very attractive objects, coloured with black and orange; when pursued by birds they suddenly, and by instinct, poise themselves upon a branch and display the under side of the closed wings, which so exactly represents a dead leaf as to defy detection. One corner of the wing is elongated to form a leaf-stalk, from which springs the mid-rib of the leaf; from this mid-rib spring various lesser ribs, in colour and in every other respect so exactly resembling a leaf as to become perfectly marvellous. Closely adjoining were displayed certain bold and rapacious birds side by side with

other species belonging to distinct families, exactly mimicking each other in form and colour; but in nature, whilst the first are bold and given to plunder the latter are in the same degree timid and inoffensive. The mimicry is evidently a means of evading attack from creatures of superior power.

THE YOUTH AND THE SAGE.

A THOUGHTFUL Arab sage, whose shrivelled face And crooked form betokened length of days, Upon a lagging horse, with halting pace, Was journeying o'er the desert's arid ways; And, deep in meditation, gave no heed To one who dashed along on snow-white steed.

"Hail, father!" cried the youth, "where journeyest thou?"

Perchance our routes not undivided lie! 'Tis good to see again thy thoughtful brow, And from thy teaching lips and searching eye Discern the foibles and the charms of youth, And feel the while thy every word is truth."

As on they rode, the youthful with the old, The tall young chieftain and the hunch-back sage,

Full many a tale replete with worth was told, Full many a quaint remark, from youth or age; And, thus discoursing on their toilsome way, The desert bloomed with wisdom all the day.

The old man—pondering long upon the theme He knew was nearest to the chieftain's heart, And hoping to direct his youthful dream To realms whence homely truths he could impart—

At last began by speaking of the grace Of form erect, of brave and comely face.

And where he saw improvement in the mind, Or probed the heart and found a well-spring there,

He gave the meed desired; but still inclined To praise where praise was due with prudent care.

Meanwhile the mettled steed, well skilled in voice, Kept, with the lame, true step, his master's choice.

The old man sadly said, "But by and by It well besemeth me thy faults to name."

Just then the chieftain turned his eager eye, And placed a hand upon the flowing main;

His faultless steed pricks up his ready ears, Awaiting but the word he gladly hears.

"Ah, friend!" the young man said, "by yonder green,

Which brightens with its hue the sandy plain, The flapping of my father's tents is seen;

And he, impatient, waits his son again. So I must haste to meet him, ere the sun Proclaims, descending, this day's labour done."

He spake the word—his courier knew the tone— The old and lame—he left them far behind!

His master's wishes ever were his own, And on he flew swift as the dreaded wind.

The sage jogged on, and mused the while he rode—"Who faults would tell rides on a lonely road."

N. U.

GEMS.

If you would have a faithful servant and one that you like serve, yourself.

By taking revenge a man is but even with his enemy, but in passing it over he is his superior.

CONTENTMENT is more satisfying than exhilaration; and contentment means simply the sum of small and quiet pleasures.

WHOEVER sincerely desires to do all the good he can will probably do much more than he imagines or will ever know.

He that will not permit his wealth to do any good to others while he is alive prevents it from doing any good to himself when he is dead.

AVOID GETTING INTO DEBT.—If you boast of a contempt for the world avoid getting into debt. It is giving to gnats the fangs of vipers.

A PASSING THOUGHT.—The great difference between the young and old; the young have the world before them, while the old are behind the world.

THE QUEEN OF MADAGASCAR.—The only sovereign of Madagascar who ever saw the sea was Radama I. He marched down to the coast with 40,000 men, but came back with a greatly diminished attendance—the march and fever cut them down by wholesale. Indeed, Radama himself may be said to have been killed by the expedition. He caught the fever, and gave himself up to dissipation while

fraternizing with the foreigners on the coast, and was never well again. Soon after his return to the capital he died. It is no wonder then that the nobles and advisers of the present Queen are very much disturbed by the wish of her Majesty to see the ocean. The letters recently received from the island represent the Queen as thoroughly bent on the gratification of her curiosity, while her Ministers are determinedly opposed to her going. It has always been the policy of the Malagasy to make their capital as inaccessible as possible from the coast, and therefore there are no roads—mere horse-tracks through great forests.

STATISTICS.

THE Fortifications (No. 2) Bill authorizes the following expenditure in the financial year 1867-68:—On the Portsmouth station, 195,000*l.*; Plymouth, 149,000*l.*; Pembroke, 19,000*l.*; Portland, 46,000*l.*; Gravesend, 93,000*l.* for works at Coalhouse Fort, Cliffe Forte, Shornmoor, and Slough Battery; Medway and Sheerness, 75,000*l.*; Dover, 5,000*l.*; Cork, 12,000*l.*; also 150,000*l.* for providing and fixing iron shields, and 55,000*l.* for land and incidental expenses. The total is 800,000*l.*, which is to be raised as usual by terminable annuities, not extending beyond thirty years, so that this generation is to pay for it.

We may get some impression of the present magnitude of London by looking at a few details of its colossal state. Its houses number more than 350,000, and its streets, if placed in a line, would extend from Liverpool to New York, and are lighted at night by 360,000 gas-lamps, consuming every twenty-four hours about 13,000,000 cubic feet of gas. Of the water supply 44,383,328 gallons are used per day. The travelling public sustain 5,000 cabs and 1,500 omnibuses, besides all other sorts of vehicles which human need can require or human wit invent. Its hungry population devour in the course of every year 1,600,000 quarters of wheat, 240,000 bullocks, 1,700,000 sheep, 28,000 calves, 35,000 pigs, 10,000,000 head of game, 3,000,000 salmon, and innumerable fish of other sorts, and consume 43,200,000 gallons of beer, 2,000,000 gallons of spirit, and 65,000 pipes of wine. As a consequence 2,400 doctors find constant employment. London, finally, supports 852 churches, which are presided over by 930 divines of greater or less note.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THERE is a report that the Emperor of the French will visit England later in the season.

THE stirrups which the Sultan used at Wimbledon were of pure gold.

BEFORE the Sultan left our shores he received a copy of the Turkish Bible, in suitable binding, as a present from the British and Foreign Bible Society.

It is stated that the sale of cedar of Florida for making pencils amounts to a million of dollars annually.

THE Sultan spent 35,000*l.*, the Viceroy 15,000*l.* in this country. This does not include some of the handsomest presents. The Viceroy's 25,000*l.* necklace was, it is said, purchased for his noble hostess.

THE Viceroy is said to have been immensely struck with the beauty of the English ladies, and to have found but one fault with them—that they rode on horseback, in his eyes a great indecorum.

A SYMBOL OF THE FUTURE.—In New Zealand, when the marriage ceremony takes place, it is a very old custom to knock the heads of the bride and bridegroom together previous to their union.

THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA.—The Austrian journals state that the Emperor Francis Joseph, on learning the execution of his brother Maximilian, declared that he would never again sign a death-warrant.

ON Sunday, July 21st, M. Godard ascended in a balloon at Paris, spent the night in the clouds, and descended the next afternoon beyond Cologne—over 300 miles from Paris. The Germans made a great fuss with the adventurers, and held quite a *fête*.

GOLDEN HAIR.—Golden hair is going out of fashion and dark hair is coming in. Fashion could not have offered common sense a better revenge than the sight of the beauties that were dark-haired turning golden and then turning black again. Is the changing typical?

OUR list of distinguished guests is not yet complete. We are to have a visit from the King and Queen of Portugal. Portugal is our oldest ally, and its Sovereign is our Queen's cousin. Is King Luis to be sent to the Clarendon like his wife's brother, the Duke of Aosta?

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

PETER CAKEBREAD.—You cannot do better than copy the formulae in our correspondence columns.

SAMUEL W.—De A.—If you desire to have the work in question by all means send the order and postage stamps. The publishers your name are highly respectable.

T. H. W.—1. The recipe which we gave against blistering the hands is a preventive, and therefore to be used before roving. 2. Handwriting businesslike, being both clear and legible.

H. (Belfast).—We cannot give you a recipe for the nasal disorder you name. You may be suffering from incipient *polypus*. Apply at once to an hospital surgeon, who will in all probability give you immediate relief.

A CORRESPONDENT.—1. To obtain the berth you name apply either personally, or by letter enclosing references, to the secretary of either of the steamboat companies you mention. 2. We never heard of a "midshipman" of a Gravesend boat.

W. H.—Our advice is, do not attempt a cure by any Quack means, but apply at once to the surgeon consultant of the hospital in your vicinity. You are very young, and will doubtless "grow out of it." Having so far improved, a few years will in all probability effect the cure.

M. B.—1. You cannot get your nephew into Christ Hospital (Blaccot School) without obtaining a "presentation" from one of the governors. 2. It certainly would not be prudent on the part of a young woman to travel in company with her betrothed husband unaccompanied by other friends.

EDWARD.—A husband is entitled to all the personal property which his wife takes under the will. The proper course for the executors to pursue will be to take both husband's and wife's receipts for all property handed over to them.

ALPHONSE.—Any good hard ball will do for boys' cricket; the regular cricket ball is nine inches in circumference, and does not weigh less than five ounces and a half nor more than five ounces and three-quarters. This is called the *match ball*.

J. FULTON.—A very delicate oil, much used in Russian cookery, is extracted from the seeds of the sunflower, and is obtained by enclosing them in bags, and steeping them in warm water after which the oil is expressed; it is said to be very delicious, and as good as butter.

L. R.—1. There is no method by which you can render sunken eyes more prominent, patience and Dame Nature alone can help you; but why desire the alteration? Do you not know that the sunken eye is supposed to be a sign of a reflective mind? 2. Avoid the walnut shells. Play no tricks with nature, or you will assuredly suffer.

G. L.—The second husband of a widow to whom her first husband left the freehold property for life, subject to the then existing mortgage upon it, has only a lien upon the property to the extent of the mortgage which he paid off. The children by the first husband on the death of their mother, will be entitled to the property, subject to the mortgage.

AURELIA.—Major means greater and minor less; these words are applied in music to intervals in general, but particularly to the third both in melody and harmony. A minor interval contains one semitone less than its corresponding major one, thus the major third consists of four semitones, the minor third of three.

FLORA.—The flower called *Angelica archangelica* belongs to the class *Pentstemonia*, order *Digyna*, and natural order *Umbellifera*. It is a large, bushy annual, found in the most northern regions, such as Lapland and Greenland. The Laplanders look upon it as the "spirit of poetry and courage," and think if they breathe their breath with it that it will infuse into them successful love and irresistible valour.

TYRELL.—Establishments for the purpose of lending money on personal effects, &c., are of considerable antiquity. In the middle ages the Lombards, who were then the principal merchants, took to this branch of commerce, and from them the modern system of pawnbroking is undoubtedly derived. Michael de Northberg, Bishop of London in the reign of Edward III., was the first who introduced it into England.

MELINDA.—The Danish national lyric which accompanied the princess on her route through her native country was written by Johan Ewald, one of the most vigorous dramatic and lyrical poets of Germany. It was struck off by him in a happy moment amidst great illness and poverty, and was immediately adopted as the national anthem of his country. The incident to which it refers took place in the great sea fight between the Danes and Swedes on the coast of Denmark, July 11, 1644, when King Christian IV. commanded the fleet as his own admiral. Although twelve men full dead

or disabled around him, struck by the splinters of a piece of timber shattered by a cannon ball, and the king himself was severely wounded, he never moved from his post until the battle was won. "Niels Juel," mentioned in the lyric, was a celebrated Danish admiral, and "Tordenshoj" was the son of a pirate of another famous seaman, Vice-Admiral Peterwessel.

AUBREY.—To form a happy and well-ordered family there should always be one firm and sweet temper, possessing the power of controlling without seeming to dictate. The essence of good breeding is in the gift of conciliation; a man who has every other title to our respect besides that of courtesy is in danger of forfeiting them all; a rude manner renders its owner liable to affront. He is never without dignity who avoids wounding the dignity of others.

R. FRANK.—India-rubber readily dissolves in pure ether, and affords a colourless solution when put into hot naphtha distilled from native petroleum, or from coal-tar; it swells to a considerable extent, and if then triturated with a pestle, and pressed through a sieve, it affords a homogeneous varnish, which being applied by a flat edge of metal or wood to cloth prepares it for forming the patent water-proof cloth. India-rubber is also dissolved in linseed oil, and in the oils of lavender and sassafras.

J. TAYLOR.—Algebra is said to have been invented by Diophantus, who first wrote upon the subject about the year 200 A.D. Algebra, as a science, has undergone no revolution since the time of Harriot and Descartes, but it has been improved in all its details, and greatly varied and extended in its applications; it has completely superseded the comparatively feeble ancient analysis, and may now be regarded as forming the basis of the whole edifice of mathematical science.

A. Y. Z.—Good English champagne may be made by boiling nine pounds of moist sugar in three gallons of water for half an hour; skim it well, and pour the boiling liquor on one gallon of currants, picked from the stalks but not bruised; when cold ferment it for two days with half a pint of ale yeast, then pour it through a flannel bag into a clean cask with half a pint of lingling finings. When it has done working stop it up for a month, and then bottle it off. Put a lump of sugar into each bottle. To make it of grapes use the same quantity of that fruit instead of the currants.

WE PASS ALONG.

Still day by day we pass along
The busy path of life,
And listen to the mingled sounds
Of joy, and grief, and strife.
The sunbeams give their radiant light,
The shadows near us stray,
And many hopes and many cares
Go with us all the way.

The clouds which float along our sky
Are sometimes tipped with gold,
And sometimes heavily they fall—
Tempests, dark, and cold.
With selfish aims and wilful hearts
We tread the great highway,
Grasping with careless hands the flowers
Which bloom for us each day.

A. K.

T. H. W., seventeen, 5 ft. 5 in., and fair. Respondent must be about the same age, tall, dark, and respectable.

HERET LLOYD (a gunmaker), twenty-one, and plainly educated. Respondent must be domesticated.

WALTER FOOTE, twenty-five, tall, dark, gentlemanly, and with 120*l*. a year. Respondent must have a little money.

C. WALLER, twenty-two, medium height, and dark. Respondent must be about eighteen, ladylike, and tall.

EMMA, 5 ft. 10 in. height, dark brown hair and eyes, and of a loving disposition.

M. S., middle age. Respondent must be about the same age, possess some property, and have an income.

ELIZABETH, eighteen, tall, can play and sing, but not domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, gentlemanly, with an income.

BANISTER, sixteen, good figure, and has a small income. Respondent must be steady and have a lucrative occupation; brown hair preferred.

SHAMYL, twenty-eight, 5 ft. 9 in., fair, blue eyes, light brown hair, mustache and beard. Respondent must be dark and about twenty-five.

ISOLDA, thirty, medium height, dark hair and eyes, educated, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be educated and affectionate.

JANE, blue eyes, fair hair, good looking, thoroughly domesticated, and fond of music and home. (Handwriting pretty and ladylike.)

HARRIS (a mechanic), twenty-five, 5 ft. 5 in., dark, sober, steady habits, and a poet. Respondent must be fond of poetry and music and be between nineteen and twenty-five.

STYNNER R. (a watchmaker), thirty, medium height, fair, and good looking. Respondent must have a little money; a brunette preferred.

TOM D., twenty-one, tall, good looking, brown hair and eyes, and in a good business. Respondent must be amiable, does not matter about her being pretty; a small fortune preferred.

DORA and ELISE. "Dora," sixteen, 5 ft. 5 in., dark gray eyes, light brown hair, and good teeth. "Elise," twenty, medium height, dark blue eyes, and golden hair. Respondents must be tall, dark, and gentlemanly.

LONDON (a widower), between forty and fifty, good looking, pleasing manners, and in a good situation. Respondent must not be less than forty, good looking, inclined to embonpoint, fond of music, and possess a little money.

ANNE D., eighteen, medium height, auburn hair, hazel eyes, fond of music, and will have 500*l*. when twenty-one. Respondent must be from twenty-three to twenty-five, dark and good tempered, with an income of 2*l*. per week.

A MOTHER.—The sleeping together of the healthy and the unhealthy, of the young with the old, cannot be too much deprecated. Parents and friends ought to oppose it as much as lies in their power, for during the night considerable exhalation proceeds from the body, and a large quantity of the vapours of the surrounding air is absorbed; two healthy children sleeping together will mutually give and receive healthy exhalations, but a weak, sickly adult

near a child will in exchange for health impart weakness; a sickly mother near her daughter communicates sickly emanations to her—if the mother has a pulmonary consumption it will ultimately be communicated to her child. It is a well-known fact that even sleeping in the bed in which a consumptive has slept is a powerful and sure source of contagion for both men and women, but especially for young people.

ALICE.—It is not white gloves alone that require cleaning; green, buff, mauve, and all light gloves are always worn, but they soon soil, and thus lose their beauty long before they are worn out. To clean such gloves take 2 oz. of white curd soap, a 1-oz. of carbonate of potash, a li/16 water, and 1 drachm of carbonate of ammonia; cut the soap fine and boil it gently in the water; when of the consistency of paste add the two other ingredients and mix well together; let it get cold, then rub the paste upon the gloves (upon the hand) with clean flannel, and as the dirt disappears use more clean flannel to brighten them.

S. A.—1. Your system, without doubt, being out of order has produced the disorder you name, hence have regard to the conduct of your general health; take a good tonic, a purifier or strengthener of the blood, say a preparation of iron or sarsaparilla, at the same time be temperate both in eating and drinking, and take plenty of open air exercise. 2. There is no book describing the duties of purser on board steam-ships. If, however, you apply at the office of a shipowner you will obtain the necessary information. A purser must necessarily be a good accountant. Your handwriting with a little more care would fit you for the office, supposing you could obtain it.

ANON.—Sculpture in the early history of most nations had its origin in religious worship, and was chiefly employed in the service of religion; it was so with the ancient Britons, who on emerging from absolute barbarism, manifested the greatest adhesion to idol worship and superstitious ceremonies. When the Romans conquered Britain the people, in imitation of them, carved statues, built temples, baths, and other structures, remains of which have been found in different parts of England. The last reign of Henry III. was favourable to British sculpture, for during that reign artists were allured from foreign lands by promises of reward, and great encouragement was given to sculptors of our own country. The noble cathedrals of York and Gloucester were erected at this time.

CHARLES.—Scott, from *scot*, an Anglo-Saxon word, originally signified "a part" or "portion"; it meant also in composition any sum paid—thus *scot-and-lod*, *scot-and-shot*, was the name of the ecclesiastical due payable at the open grave for the benefit of the soul of the deceased. Previous to the Reform Act, in the reign of William IV., in many boroughs the payment of *scot* and *lot* constituted a qualification as a voter for a Member of Parliament for the borough. Those who possessed such qualification at the time of the Act passing had, under certain conditions, their rights reserved to them. The qualification consists in the payment of the rates which are allotted to each person at the proportion to be contributed by him. The criterion adopted for the purpose of ascertaining the *scot* and *lot* voters of a borough is the poor-rate of the respective parishes comprised in it.

POETRY.—"The Banquet at the Guildhall," by T. THORPE, is respectfully declined, for although the ideas are rather prettily expressed, the metre is incorrect—"Earnings," by C. SIMON, possesses some merit, but are not quite up to our standard; it is also declined with thanks—LORRIE, your poem is good, and under consideration.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

N. S. E. is responded to by—"Alice R.," twenty-six, 5 ft. 3 in., dark hair and eyes, a brunette, not good looking, but thoroughly domesticated.

A. T. is professionally by—"Josephine," fair, light curly hair, blue eyes, and will have 100*l*. a year.

LORELY TOM by—"Nellie," eighteen, medium height, blonde, pretty, and of a loving disposition.

H. C. H. by—"Minnie," seventeen, tall, a blonde, amiable, and will have a small annuity when she is of age.

MOSE ROSE by—"Rosebud," 5 ft., blue eyes, dark hair, and good looking.

W. D. by—"Lizzie," seventeen, fair, and thinks she would suit.

C. H. C. by—"Ellen" (a widow), twenty-seven, a tradeswoman and a member of the English Church.

F. H. W. by—"S. N. E. H.," eighteen, medium height, light complexion, brown hair, gentle and amiable, and thinks she would suit.

F. H. W. (Leicesterhire) by—"Will Archer," twenty-one, 5 ft. 7 in., fair, curly hair, good looking, a tradesman's son, and will start in business in a twelvemonth.

A GERMAN LADY by—"John Harris."

WIDOW (forty-seven, with two children) by—"S. C." (a widower), fifty, with property and a few hundred pounds.

CONSTANCE by—"Cassio," twenty-five, 5 ft. 9 in., and dark; and—"Cheriana," twenty-six, 5 ft. 10 in., good looking, fond of music, and in a good business.

J. W. by—"A. R."—"A. D. N.," middle age, income 130*l*. 70*l*. of which is secure for life; and—"Rayford."

LEAH MORTIMER by—"Fred L.," twenty-three, 5 ft. 7 in., dark hair and whiskers, and good looking—"Jim" (a widower), twenty-seven, 5 ft. 6 in., good looking, and will some day have a good business; and—"N. Z.," thirty, a professional.

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